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STANDARD NOVELS.

N° XLI.

"No kind of literature is so generally attractive as Fiction. Pictures of life and manners, and Stories of adventure, are more eagerly received by the many than graver productions, however important these latter may be. APULEIUS is better remembered by his fable of Cupid and Psyche than by his abstruser Platonic writings; and the Decameron of BOCCACCIO has outlived the Latin Treatises, and other learned works of that author."

VATHEK.

BY WILLIAM BECKFORD, ESQ.

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

BY HORACE WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD.

THE BRAVO OF VENICE.

BY M. G. LEWIS, ESQ.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, 8. NEW BURLINGTON STREET
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):

BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH;
CUMMING, DUBLIN; AND
GALIGNANI, PARIS.

1834.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

T. Pickering, pinxt. T. W. Dean, sculpt.

VATHEK.

Near these were distinguished by the splendour of the moon which streamed full on the place, characters like those on the sabres of the Giaours, and which possessed the same virtue of changing every moment. These, after vacillating for some time fixed at last in Arabic letters.

London Published by Richard Bentley, 1834.

VATHEK;

AN ARABIAN TALE.

BY

W. BECKFORD, ESQ.

He would prostrate himself upon the ground to lap the water of which he could never have enough.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY,
[SUCCESSOR TO H. COLBURN]
CUMMING, DUBLIN;—BELL & BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH,
GALIGNANI, PARIS.
1834.

VATHEK:

AN ARABIAN TALE.

BY

WILLIAM BECKFORD, ESQ.

WITH NOTES,

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, 8. NEW BURLINGTON STREET
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):
BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH;
CUMMING, DUBLIN; AND
GALIGNANI, PARIS.
1834.

"The tale of Vathek, which was originally *written in French*, and published before the author had closed his twentieth year, has, for more than half a century, continued in possession of all the celebrity which it at once commanded. Vathek is, indeed, without reference to the time of life when the author penned it, a very remarkable performance." — *Quarterly Review*, June, 1834.

"For correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, 'Vathek' far surpasses all European imitations. As an eastern tale, even 'Rasselas' must bow before it: his *happy valley* will not bear a comparison with the 'Hall of Eblis.'" — Lord Byron.

VATHEK.

VATHEK, ninth caliph of the race of the Abassides, was the son of Motassem, and the grandson of Haroun al Raschid. From an early accession to the throne, and the talents he possessed to adorn it, his subjects were induced to expect that his reign would be long and happy. His figure was pleasing and majestic: but when he was angry, one of his eyes became so terrible, that no person could bear to behold it; and the wretch upon whom it was fixed, instantly fell backward, and sometimes expired. For fear, however, of depopulating his dominions, and making his palace desolate, he but rarely gave way to his anger.

Being much addicted to women and the pleasures of the table, he sought by his affability to procure agreeable companions; and he succeeded the better as his generosity was unbounded and his indulgences unrestrained: for he did not think, with the Caliph Omar Ben Abdalaziz, that it was necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy paradise in the next.

He surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors. The palace of Alkoremi, which his father, Motassem, had erected on the hill of Pied Horses, and which commanded the whole city of Samarah, was, in his idea, far too scanty: he added, therefore, five wings, or rather other palaces, which he destined for the particular gratification of each of the senses.

In the first of these were tables continually covered with

the most exquisite dainties; which were supplied both by night and by day, according to their constant consumption; whilst the most delicious wines and the choicest cordials flowed forth from a hundred fountains that were never exhausted. This palace was called *The Eternal or unsatiating Banquet.*

The second was styled *The Temple of Melody,* or *The Nectar of the Soul.* It was inhabited by the most skilful musicians and admired poets of the time; who not only displayed their talents within, but dispersing in bands without, caused every surrounding scene to reverberate their songs, which were continually varied in the most delightful succession.

The palace named *The Delight of the Eyes,* or *The Support of Memory,* was one entire enchantment. Rarities, collected from every corner of the earth, were there found in such profusion as to dazzle and confound, but for the order in which they were arranged. One gallery exhibited the pictures of the celebrated Mani, and statues, that seemed to be alive. Here a well-managed perspective attracted the sight; there the magic of optics agreeably deceived it: whilst the naturalist, on his part, exhibited in their several classes the various gifts that Heaven had bestowed on our globe. In a word, Vathek omitted nothing in this palace that might gratify the curiosity of those who resorted to it, although he was not able to satisfy his own; for, of all men, he was the most curious.

The Palace of Perfumes, which was termed likewise *The Incentive to Pleasure,* consisted of various halls, where the different perfumes which the earth produces were kept perpetually burning in censers of gold. Flambeaux and aromatic lamps were here lighted in open day. But the too powerful effects of this agreeable delirium might be alleviated by descending into an immense garden, where an assemblage of every fragrant flower diffused through the air the purest odours.

The fifth palace, denominated *The Retreat of Mirth, or the Dangerous,* was frequented by troops of young females, beautiful as the Houris, and not less seducing; who never failed to receive, with caresses, all whom the caliph al-

lowed to approach them, and enjoy a few hours of their company.

Notwithstanding the sensuality in which Vathek indulged, he experienced no abatement in the love of his people, who thought that a sovereign giving himself up to pleasure was as able to govern as one who declared himself an enemy to it. But the unquiet and impetuous disposition of the caliph would not allow him to rest there. He had studied so much for his amusement in the lifetime of his father, as to acquire a great deal of knowledge, though not a sufficiency to satisfy himself; for he wished to know every thing; even sciences that did not exist. He was fond of engaging in disputes with the learned, but did not allow them to push their opposition with warmth. He stopped with presents the mouths of those whose mouths could be stopped; whilst others, whom his liberality was unable to subdue, he sent to prison to cool their blood, a remedy that often succeeded.

Vathek discovered also a predilection for theological controversy; but it was not with the orthodox that he usually held. By this means he induced the zealots to oppose him, and then persecuted them in return; for he resolved, at any rate, to have reason on his side.

The great prophet, Mahomet, whose vicars the caliphs are, beheld with indignation from his abode, in the seventh heaven, the irreligious conduct of such a vicegerent. "Let us leave him to himself," said he to the Genii, who are always ready to receive his commands: "let us see to what lengths his folly and impiety will carry him: if he run into excess, we shall know how to chastise him. Assist him, therefore, to complete the tower, which, in imitation of Nimrod, he hath begun; not, like that great warrior, to escape being drowned, but from the insolent curiosity of penetrating the secrets of heaven: — he will not divine the fate that awaits him."

The Genii obeyed; and, when the workmen had raised their structure a cubit in the daytime, two cubits more were added in the night. The expedition, with which the fabric arose, was not a little flattering to the vanity of Vathek: he fancied, that even insensible matter showed a

forwardness to subserve his designs; not considering that the successes of the foolish and wicked form the first rod of their chastisement.

His pride arrived at its height, when having ascended, for the first time, the fifteen hundred stairs of his tower, he cast his eyes below, and beheld men not larger than pismires; mountains, than shells; and cities, than beehives. The idea, which such an elevation inspired of his own grandeur, completely bewildered him: he was almost ready to adore himself; till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars as high above him as they appeared when he stood on the surface of the earth. He consoled himself, however, for this intruding and unwelcome perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others; and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach of his sight, and extort from the stars the decrees of his destiny.

With this view, the inquisitive prince passed most of his nights on the summit of his tower, till becoming an adept in the mysteries of astrology, he imagined that the planets had disclosed to him the most marvellous adventures, which were to be accomplished by an extraordinary personage, from a country altogether unknown. Prompted by motives of curiosity, he had always been courteous to strangers; but, from this instant, he redoubled his attention, and ordered it to be announced, by sound of trumpet, through all the streets of Samarah, that no one of his subjects, on peril of his displeasure, should either lodge or detain a traveller, but forthwith bring him to the palace.

Not long after this proclamation, arrived in his metropolis a man so abominably hideous, that the very guards, who arrested him, were forced to shut their eyes as they led him along: the caliph himself appeared startled at so horrible a visage; but joy succeeded to this emotion of terror, when the stranger displayed to his view such rarities as he had never before seen, and of which he had no conception.

In reality, nothing was ever so extraordinary as the merchandise this stranger produced; most of his curiosities, which were not less admirable for their workmanship than

splendour, had, besides, their several virtues described on a parchment fastened to each. There were slippers, which, by spontaneous springs, enabled the feet to walk; knives, that cut without motion of the hand; sabres, that dealt the blow at the person they were wished to strike; and the whole enriched with gems that were hitherto unknown.

The sabres especially, the blades of which emitted a dazzling radiance, fixed, more than all the rest, the caliph's attention; who promised himself to decipher, at his leisure, the uncouth characters engraven on their sides. Without, therefore, demanding their price, he ordered all the coined gold to be brought from his treasury, and commanded the merchant to take what he pleased. The stranger obeyed, took little, and remained silent.

Vathek, imagining that the merchant's taciturnity was occasioned by the awe which his presence inspired, encouraged him to advance, and asked him, with an air of condescension, who he was? whence he came? and where he obtained such beautiful commodities? The man, or rather monster, instead of making a reply, thrice rubbed his forehead, which, as well as his body, was blacker than ebony; four times clapped his paunch, the projection of which was enormous; opened wide his huge eyes, which glowed like firebrands; began to laugh with a hideous noise, and discovered his long amber-coloured teeth, bestreaked with green.

The caliph, though a little startled, renewed his enquiries, but without being able to procure a reply. At which, beginning to be ruffled, he exclaimed, —"Knowest thou, wretch, who I am, and at whom thou art aiming thy gibes?"—Then, addressing his guards,—"Have ye heard him speak?—is he dumb?"—"He hath spoken," they replied, "but to no purpose."—"Let him speak then again," said Vathek, "and tell me who he is, from whence he came, and where he procured these singular curiosities; or I swear, by the ass of Balaam, that I will make him rue his pertinacity."

This menace was accompanied by one of the caliph's angry and perilous glances, which the stranger sustained

without the slightest emotion; although his eyes were fixed on the terrible eye of the prince.

No words can describe the amazement of the courtiers, when they beheld this rude merchant withstand the encounter unshocked. They all fell prostrate with their faces on the ground, to avoid the risk of their lives; and would have continued in the same abject posture, had not the caliph exclaimed, in a furious tone,—"Up, cowards! seize the miscreant! see that he be committed to prison, and guarded by the best of my soldiers! Let him, however, retain the money I gave him; it is not my intent to take from him his property; I only want him to speak."

No sooner had he uttered these words, than the stranger was surrounded, pinioned, and bound with strong fetters, and hurried away to the prison of the great tower, which was encompassed by seven empalements of iron bars, and armed with spikes in every direction, longer and sharper than spits. The caliph, nevertheless, remained in the most violent agitation. He sat down indeed to eat; but, of the three hundred dishes that were daily placed before him, he could taste of no more than thirty-two.

A diet, to which he had been so little accustomed, was sufficient of itself to prevent him from sleeping; what then must be its effect when joined to the anxiety that preyed upon his spirits? At the first glimpse of dawn he hastened to the prison, again to importune this intractable stranger; but the rage of Vathek exceeded all bounds on finding the prison empty; the grates burst asunder, and his guards lying lifeless around him. In the paroxysm of his passion he fell furiously on the poor carcasses, and kicked them till evening without intermission. His courtiers and vizirs exerted their efforts to soothe his extravagance; but, finding every expedient ineffectual, they all united in one vociferation,—"The caliph is gone mad! the caliph is out of his senses!"

This outcry, which soon resounded through the streets of Samarah, at length reached the ears of Carathis, his mother, who flew in the utmost consternation to try her ascendency on the mind of her son. Her tears and ca-

resses called off his attention; and he was prevailed upon, by her entreaties, to be brought back to the palace.

Carathis, apprehensive of leaving Vathek to himself, had him put to bed; and, seating herself by him, endeavoured by her conversation to appease and compose him. Nor could any one have attempted it with better success; for the caliph not only loved her as a mother, but respected her as a person of superior genius. It was she who had induced him, being a Greek herself, to adopt the sciences and systems of her country which all good Mussulmans hold in such thorough abhorrence.

Judiciary astrology was one of those sciences in which Carathis was a perfect adept. She began, therefore, with reminding her son of the promise which the stars had made him; and intimated an intention of consulting them again. "Alas!" said the caliph as soon as he could speak, "what a fool I have been! not for having bestowed forty thousand kicks on my guards, who so tamely submitted to death; but for never considering that this extraordinary man was the same that the planets had foretold; whom, instead of ill-treating, I should have conciliated by all the arts of persuasion."

"The past," said Carathis, "cannot be recalled; but it behoves us to think of the future: perhaps, you may again see the object you so much regret: it is possible the inscriptions on the sabres will afford information. Eat, therefore, and take thy repose, my dear son. We will consider, to-morrow, in what manner to act."

Vathek yielded to her counsel as well as he could, and arose in the morning with a mind more at ease. The sabres he commanded to be instantly brought; and, poring upon them, through a coloured glass, that their glittering might not dazzle, he set himself in earnest to decipher the inscriptions; but his reiterated attempts were all of them nugatory: in vain did he beat his head, and bite his nails; not a letter of the whole was he able to ascertain. So unlucky a disappointment would have undone him again, had not Carathis, by good fortune, entered the apartment.

"Have patience, my son!" said she: "you certainly are possessed of every important science; but the know-

ledge of languages is a trifle at best; and the accomplishment of none but a pedant. Issue a proclamation, that you will confer such rewards as become your greatness, upon any one that shall interpret what you do not understand, and what is beneath you to learn; you will soon find your curiosity gratified."

"That may be," said the caliph; "but, in the mean time, I shall be horribly disgusted by a crowd of smatterers, who will come to the trial as much for the pleasure of retailing their jargon, as from the hope of gaining the reward. To avoid this evil, it will be proper to add, that I will put every candidate to death, who shall fail to give satisfaction; for, thank Heaven! I have skill enough to distinguish, whether one translates or invents."

"Of that I have no doubt," replied Carathis; "but to put the ignorant to death is somewhat severe, and may be productive of dangerous effects. Content yourself with commanding their beards to be burnt: beards in a state are not quite so essential as men."

The caliph submitted to the reasons of his mother; and, sending for Morakanabad, his prime vizir, said,—"Let the common criers proclaim, not only in Samarah, but throughout every city in my empire, that whosoever will repair hither and decipher certain characters which appear to be inexplicable, shall experience that liberality for which I am renowned; but that all who fail upon trial shall have their beards burnt off to the last hair. Let them add, also, that I will bestow fifty beautiful slaves, and as many jars of apricots from the Isle of Kirmith, upon any man that shall bring me intelligence of the stranger."

The subjects of the caliph, like their sovereign, being great admirers of women and apricots from Kirmith, felt their mouths water at these promises, but were totally unable to gratify their hankering; for no one knew what had become of the stranger.

As to the caliph's other requisition, the result was different. The learned, the half learned, and those who were neither, but fancied themselves equal to both, came boldly to hazard their beards, and all shamefully lost them. The exaction of these forfeitures, which found sufficient em-

ployment for the eunuchs, gave them such a smell of singed hair, as greatly to disgust the ladies of the seraglio, and to make it necessary that this new occupation of their guardians should be transferred to other hands.

At length, however, an old man presented himself, whose beard was a cubit and a half longer than any that had appeared before him. The officers of the palace whispered to each other, as they ushered him in,—"What a pity, oh! what a great pity that such a beard should be burnt!" even the caliph, when he saw it, concurred with them in opinion; but his concern was entirely needless. This venerable personage read the characters with facility, and explained them verbatim as follows:—"We were made where every thing is well made: we are the least of the wonders of a place where all is wonderful, and deserving the sight of the first potentate on earth."

"You translate admirably!" cried Vathek; "I know to what these marvellous characters allude. Let him receive as many robes of honour and thousands of sequins of gold as he hath spoken words. I am in some measure relieved from the perplexity that embarrassed me!" Vathek invited the old man to dine, and even to remain some days in the palace.

Unluckily for him, he accepted the offer; for the caliph having ordered him next morning to be called, said,—"Read again to me what you have read already; I cannot hear too often the promise that is made me—the completion of which I languish to obtain." The old man forthwith put on his green spectacles, but they instantly dropped from his nose, on perceiving that the characters he had read the day preceding had given place to others of different import. "What ails you?" asked the caliph; "and why these symptoms of wonder?"—"Sovereign of the world!" replied the old man, "these sabres hold another language to-day from that they yesterday held."—"How say you?" returned Vathek:—"but it matters not; tell me, if you can, what they mean."—"It is this, my lord," rejoined the old man:—"'Woe to the rash mortal who seeks to know that of which he should remain ignorant; and to undertake that which surpasseth his

power!'"—"And woe to thee!" cried the caliph, in a burst of indignation: "to-day thou art void of understanding: begone from my presence, they shall burn but the half of thy beard, because thou wert yesterday fortunate in guessing:—my gifts I never resume." The old man, wise enough to perceive he had luckily escaped, considering the folly of disclosing so disgusting a truth, immediately withdrew and appeared not again.

But it was not long before Vathek discovered abundant reason to regret his precipitation; for, though he could not decipher the characters himself, yet, by constantly poring upon them, he plainly perceived that they every day changed; and, unfortunately, no other candidate offered to explain them. This perplexing occupation inflamed his blood, dazzled his sight, and brought on such a giddiness and debility that he could hardly support himself. He failed not, however, though in so reduced a condition, to be often carried to his tower, as he flattered himself that he might there read in the stars, which he went to consult, something more congruous to his wishes: but in this his hopes were deluded; for his eyes, dimmed by the vapours of his head, began to subserve his curiosity so ill, that he beheld nothing but a thick, dun cloud, which he took for the most direful of omens.

Agitated with so much anxiety, Vathek entirely lost all firmness; a fever seized him, and his appetite failed. Instead of being one of the greatest eaters, he became as distinguished for drinking. So insatiable was the thirst which tormented him, that his mouth, like a funnel, was always open to receive the various liquors that might be poured into it, and especially cold water, which calmed him more than any other.

This unhappy prince, being thus incapacitated for the enjoyment of any pleasure, commanded the palaces of the five senses to be shut up; forebore to appear in public, either to display his magnificence or administer justice, and retired to the inmost apartment of his harem. As he had ever been an excellent husband, his wives, overwhelmed with grief at his deplorable situation, incessantly supplied him with prayers for his health, and water for his thirst.

In the mean time the Princess Carathis, whose affliction no words can describe, instead of confining herself to sobbing and tears, was closetted daily with the vizir Morakanabad, to find out some cure, or mitigation, of the caliph's disease. Under the persuasion that it was caused by enchantment, they turned over together, leaf by leaf, all the books of magic that might point out a remedy; and caused the horrible stranger, whom they accused as the enchanter, to be every where sought for, with the strictest diligence.

At the distance of a few miles from Samarah stood a high mountain, whose sides were swarded with wild thyme and basil, and its summit overspread with so delightful a plain, that it might have been taken for the paradise destined for the faithful. Upon it grew a hundred thickets of eglantine and other fragrant shrubs; a hundred arbours of roses, entwined with jessamine and honeysuckle; as many clumps of orange trees, cedar, and citron; whose branches, interwoven with the palm, the pomegranate, and the vine, presented every luxury that could regale the eye or the taste. The ground was strewed with violets, harebells, and pansies; in the midst of which numerous tufts of jonquils, hyacinths, and carnations perfumed the air. Four fountains, not less clear than deep, and so abundant as to slake the thirst of ten armies, seemed purposely placed here, to make the scene more resemble the garden of Eden watered by four sacred rivers. Here, the nightingale sang the birth of the rose, her well-beloved, and, at the same time, lamented its short-lived beauty: whilst the dove deplored the loss of more substantial pleasures; and the wakeful lark hailed the rising light that re-animates the whole creation. Here, more than any where, the mingled melodies of birds expressed the various passions which inspired them; and the exquisite fruits which they pecked at pleasure seemed to have given them a double energy.

To this mountain Vathek was sometimes brought, for the sake of breathing a purer air; and, especially, to drink at will of the four fountains. His attendants were his mother, his wives, and some eunuchs, who assiduously employed themselves in filling capacious bowls of rock

crystal, and emulously presenting them to him. But it frequently happened, that his avidity exceeded their zeal, insomuch, that he would prostrate himself upon the ground to lap the water, of which he could never have enough.

One day, when this unhappy prince had been long lying in so debasing a posture, a voice, hoarse but strong, thus addressed him:—"Why dost thou assimilate thyself to a dog, O caliph, proud as thou art of thy dignity and power?" At this apostrophe, he raised up his head, and beheld the stranger that had caused him so much affliction. Inflamed with anger at the sight, he exclaimed,—"Accursed Giaour! what comest thou hither to do?—is it not enough to have transformed a prince, remarkable for his agility, into a water budget? Perceivest thou not, that I may perish by drinking to excess, as well as by thirst?"

"Drink, then, this draught," said the stranger, as he presented to him a phial of a red and yellow mixture: "and, to satiate the thirst of thy soul, as well as of thy body, know, that I am an Indian; but from a region of India which is wholly unknown."

The caliph, delighted to see his desires accomplished in part, and flattering himself with the hope of obtaining their entire fulfilment, without a moment's hesitation swallowed the potion, and instantaneously found his health restored, his thirst appeased, and his limbs as agile as ever. In the transports of his joy, Vathek leaped upon the neck of the frightful Indian, and kissed his horrid mouth and hollow cheeks, as though they had been the coral lips and the lilies and roses of his most beautiful wives.

Nor would these transports have ceased had not the eloquence of Carathis repressed them. Having prevailed upon him to return to Samarah, she caused a herald to proclaim as loudly as possible,—"The wonderful stranger hath appeared again; he hath healed the caliph; he hath spoken! he hath spoken!"

Forthwith, all the inhabitants of this vast city quitted their habitations, and ran together in crowds to see the procession of Vathek and the Indian, whom they now blessed as much as they had before execrated, incessantly shouting,—"He hath healed our sovereign; he hath

spoken! he hath spoken!" Nor were these words forgotten in the public festivals, which were celebrated the same evening, to testify the general joy; for the poets applied them as a chorus to all the songs they composed on this interesting subject.

The caliph, in the mean while, caused the palaces of the senses to be again set open; and, as he found himself naturally prompted to visit that of taste in preference to the rest, immediately ordered a splendid entertainment, to which his great officers and favourite courtiers were all invited. The Indian, who was placed near the prince, seemed to think that, as a proper acknowledgment of so distinguished a privilege, he could neither eat, drink, nor talk too much. The various dainties were no sooner served up than they vanished, to the great mortification of Vathek, who piqued himself on being the greatest eater alive; and at this time in particular was blessed with an excellent appetite.

The rest of the company looked round at each other in amazement; but the Indian, without appearing to observe it, quaffed large bumpers to the health of each of them; sung in a style altogether extravagant; related stories, at which he laughed immoderately, and poured forth extemporaneous verses, which would not have been thought bad, but for the strange grimaces with which they were uttered. In a word, his loquacity was equal to that of a hundred astrologers; he ate as much as a hundred porters, and caroused in proportion.

The caliph, notwithstanding the table had been thirty-two times covered, found himself incommoded by the voraciousness of his guest, who was now considerably declined in the prince's esteem. Vathek, however, being unwilling to betray the chagrin he could hardly disguise, said in a whisper to Bababalouk, the chief of his eunuchs,—"You see how enormous his performances are in every way; what would be the consequence should he get at my wives! —Go! redouble your vigilance, and be sure look well to my Circassians, who would be more to his taste than all of the rest."

The bird of the morning had thrice renewed his song,

when the hour of the divan was announced. Vathek, in gratitude to his subjects, having promised to attend, immediately arose from table, and repaired thither, leaning upon his vizir, who could scarcely support him; so disordered was the poor prince by the wine he had drunk, and still more by the extravagant vagaries of his boisterous guest.

The vizirs, the officers of the crown and of the law, arranged themselves in a semicircle about their sovereign, and preserved a respectful silence; whilst the Indian, who looked as cool as if he had been fasting, sat down without ceremony on one of the steps of the throne, laughing in his sleeve at the indignation with which his temerity had filled the spectators.

The caliph, however, whose ideas were confused, and whose head was embarrassed, went on administering justice at hap-hazard; till at length the prime vizir, perceiving his situation, hit upon a sudden expedient to interrupt the audience and rescue the honour of his master, to whom he said in a whisper, —"My lord, the Princess Carathis, who hath passed the night in consulting the planets, informs you, that they portend you evil, and the danger is urgent. Beware, lest this stranger, whom you have so lavishly recompensed for his magical gewgaws, should make some attempt on your life: his liquor, which at first had the appearance of effecting your cure, may be no more than a poison, the operation of which will be sudden. Slight not this surmise; ask him, at least, of what it was compounded, whence he procured it; and mention the sabres which you seem to have forgotten."

Vathek, to whom the insolent airs of the stranger became every moment less supportable, intimated to his vizir, by a wink of acquiescence, that he would adopt his advice; and, at once turning towards the Indian, said, —"Get up, and declare in full divan of what drugs was compounded the liquor you enjoined me to take, for it is suspected to be poison: give also that explanation I have so earnestly desired, concerning the sabres you sold me, and thus show your gratitude for the favours heaped on you."

Having pronounced these words, in as moderate a tone

as he well could, he waited in silent expectation for an answer. But the Indian, still keeping his seat, began to renew his loud shouts of laughter, and exhibit the same horrid grimaces he had shown them before, without vouchsafing a word in reply. Vathek, no longer able to brook such insolence, immediately kicked him from the steps; instantly descending, repeated his blow; and persisted, with such assiduity, as incited all who were present to follow his example. Every foot was up and aimed at the Indian, and no sooner had any one given him a kick, than he felt himself constrained to reiterate the stroke.

The stranger afforded them no small entertainment; for, being both short and plump, he collected himself into a ball, and rolled round on all sides, at the blows of his assailants, who pressed after him, wherever he turned, with an eagerness beyond conception, whilst their numbers were every moment increasing. The ball, indeed, in passing from one apartment to another, drew every person after it that came in its way; insomuch, that the whole palace was thrown into confusion, and resounded with a tremendous clamour. The women of the harem, amazed at the uproar, flew to their blinds to discover the cause; but no sooner did they catch a glimpse of the ball, than, feeling themselves unable to refrain, they broke from the clutches of their eunuchs, who, to stop their flight, pinched them till they bled; but in vain: whilst themselves, though trembling with terror at the escape of their charge, were as incapable of resisting the attraction.

After having traversed the halls, galleries, chambers, kitchens, gardens, and stables of the palace, the Indian at last took his course through the courts; whilst the caliph, pursuing him closer than the rest, bestowed as many kicks as he possibly could; yet not without receiving now and then a few which his competitors, in their eagerness, designed for the ball.

Carathis, Morakanabad, and two or three old vizirs, whose wisdom had hitherto withstood the attraction, wishing to prevent Vathek from exposing himself in the presence of his subjects, fell down in his way to impede the pursuit: but he, regardless of their obstruction, leaped

over their heads, and went on as before. They then ordered the Muezins to call the people to prayers; both for the sake of getting them out of the way, and of endeavouring, by their petitions, to avert the calamity: but neither of these expedients was a whit more successful. The sight of this fatal ball was alone sufficient to draw after it every beholder. The Muezins themselves, though they saw it but at a distance, hastened down from their minarets, and mixed with the crowd; which continued to increase in so surprising a manner that scarce an inhabitant was left in Samarah except the aged; the sick, confined to their beds; and infants at the breast, whose nurses could run more nimbly without them. Even Carathis, Morakanabad, and the rest, were all become of the party. The shrill screams of the females, who had broken from their apartments, and were unable to extricate themselves from the pressure of the crowd, together with those of the eunuchs jostling after them, and terrified lest their charge should escape from their sight; the execrations of husbands, urging forward and menacing each other; kicks given and received; stumblings and overthrows at every step; in a word, the confusion that universally prevailed, rendered Samarah like a city taken by storm, and devoted to absolute plunder. At last, the cursed Indian, who still preserved his rotundity of figure, after passing through all the streets and public places, and leaving them empty, rolled onwards to the plain of Catoul, and entered the valley at the foot of the mountain of the four fountains.

As a continual fall of water had excavated an immense gulf in the valley, whose opposite side was closed in by a steep acclivity, the caliph and his attendants were apprehensive lest the ball should bound into the chasm, and, to prevent it, redoubled their efforts, but in vain. The Indian persevered in his onward direction; and, as had been apprehended, glancing from the precipice with the rapidity of lightning, was lost in the gulf below.

Vathek would have followed the perfidious Giaour, had not an invisible agency arrested his progress. The multitude that pressed after him were at once checked in the same manner, and a calm instantaneously ensued. They

all gazed at each other with an air of astonishment; and notwithstanding that the loss of veils and turbans, together with torn habits, and dust blended with sweat, presented a most laughable spectacle, yet there was not one smile to be seen. On the contrary, all with looks of confusion and sadness returned in silence to Samarah, and retired to their inmost apartments, without ever reflecting, that they had been impelled by an invisible power into the extravagance for which they reproached themselves; for it is but just that men, who so often arrogate to their own merit the good of which they are but instruments, should also attribute to themselves absurdities which they could not prevent.

The caliph was the only person who refused to leave the valley. He commanded his tents to be pitched there, and stationed himself on the very edge of the precipice, in spite of the representations of Carathis and Morakanabad, who pointed out the hazard of its brink giving way, and the vicinity to the magician, that had so cruelly tormented him. Vathek derided all their remonstrances; and having ordered a thousand flambeaux to be lighted, and directed his attendants to proceed in lighting more, lay down on the slippery margin, and attempted, by the help of this artificial splendour, to look through that gloom, which all the fires of the empyrean had been insufficient to pervade. One while he fancied to himself voices arising from the depth of the gulf; at another, he seemed to distinguish the accents of the Indian; but all was no more than the hollow murmur of waters, and the din of the cataracts that rushed from steep to steep down the sides of the mountain.

Having passed the night in this cruel perturbation, the caliph, at daybreak, retired to his tent; where, without taking the least sustenance, he continued to doze till the dusk of evening began again to come on. He then resumed his vigils as before, and persevered in observing them for many nights together. At length, fatigued with so fruitless an employment, he sought relief from change. To this end, he sometimes paced with hasty strides across the plain; and as he wildly gazed at the stars, reproached

them with having deceived him; but, lo! on a sudden, the clear blue sky appeared streaked over with streams of blood, which reached from the valley even to the city of Samarah. As this awful phenomenon seemed to touch his tower, Vathek at first thought of repairing thither to view it more distinctly; but, feeling himself unable to advance, and being overcome with apprehension, he muffled up his face in the folds of his robe.

Terrifying as these prodigies were, this impression upon him was no more than momentary, and served only to stimulate his love of the marvellous. Instead, therefore, of returning to his palace, he persisted in the resolution of abiding where the Indian had vanished from his view. One night, however, while he was walking as usual on the plain, the moon and stars were eclipsed at once, and a total darkness ensued. The earth trembled beneath him, and a voice came forth, the voice of the Giaour, who, in accents more sonorous than thunder, thus addressed him: —"Wouldest thou devote thyself to me? adore the terrestrial influences, and abjure Mahomet? On these conditions I will bring thee to the Palace of Subterranean Fire. There shalt thou behold, in immense depositories, the treasures which the stars have promised thee; and which will be conferred by those intelligences, whom thou shalt thus render propitious. It was from thence I brought my sabres, and it is there that Soliman Ben Daoud reposes, surrounded by the talismans that control the world."

The astonished caliph trembled as he answered, yet he answered in a style that showed him to be no novice in preternatural adventures: —"Where art thou? be present to my eyes; dissipate the gloom that perplexes me, and of which I deem thee the cause. After the many flambeaux I have burnt to discover thee, thou mayest, at least, grant a glimpse of thy horrible visage."—"Abjure then Mahomet!" replied the Indian, "and promise me full proofs of thy sincerity: otherwise, thou shalt never behold me again."

The unhappy caliph, instigated by insatiable curiosity, lavished his promises in the utmost profusion. The sky immediately brightened; and, by the light of the planets,

which seemed almost to blaze, Vathek beheld the earth open; and, at the extremity of a vast black chasm, a portal of ebony, before which stood the Indian, holding in his hand a golden key, which he sounded against the lock.

"How," cried Vathek, "can I descend to thee? — Come, take me, and instantly open the portal."—"Not so fast," replied the Indian, "impatient caliph!—Know that I am parched with thirst, and cannot open this door, till my thirst be thoroughly appeased; I require the blood of fifty children. Take them from among the most beautiful sons of thy vizirs and great men; or, neither can my thirst nor thy curiosity be satisfied. Return to Samarah; procure for me this necessary libation; come back hither; throw it thyself into this chasm, and then shalt thou see!"

Having thus spoken, the Indian turned his back on the caliph, who, incited by the suggestions of demons, resolved on the direful sacrifice. He now pretended to have regained his tranquillity, and set out for Samarah amidst the acclamations of a people who still loved him, and forebore not to rejoice, when they believed him to have recovered his reason. So successfully did he conceal the emotion of his heart, that even Carathis and Morakanabad were equally deceived with the rest. Nothing was heard of but festivals and rejoicings. The fatal ball, which no tongue had hitherto ventured to mention, was brought on the tapis. A general laugh went round, though many, still smarting under the hands of the surgeon, from the hurts received in that memorable adventure, had no great reason for mirth.

The prevalence of this gay humour was not a little grateful to Vathek, who perceived how much it conduced to his project. He put on the appearance of affability to every one; but especially to his vizirs, and the grandees of his court, whom he failed not to regale with a sumptuous banquet; during which, he insensibly directed the conversation to the children of his guests. Having asked, with a good-natured air, which of them were blessed with the handsomest boys, every father at once asserted the pretensions of his own; and the contest imperceptibly grew so warm, that nothing could have withholden them

from coming to blows but their profound reverence for the person of the caliph. Under the pretence, therefore, of reconciling the disputants, Vathek took upon him to decide; and, with this view, commanded the boys to be brought.

It was not long before a troop of these poor children made their appearance, all equipped by their fond mothers with such ornaments as might give the greatest relief to their beauty, or most advantageously display the graces of their age. But, whilst this brilliant assemblage attracted the eyes and hearts of every one besides, the caliph scrutinised each, in his turn, with a malignant avidity that passed for attention, and selected from their number the fifty whom he judged the Giaour would prefer.

With an equal show of kindness as before, he proposed to celebrate a festival on the plain, for the entertainment of his young favourites, who, he said, ought to rejoice still more than all, at the restoration of his health, on account of the favours he intended for them.

The caliph's proposal was received with the greatest delight, and soon published through Samarah. Litters, camels, and horses were prepared. Women and children, old men and young, every one placed himself as he chose. The cavalcade set forward, attended by all the confectioners in the city and its precincts; the populace, following on foot, composed an amazing crowd, and occasioned no little noise. All was joy; nor did any one call to mind, what most of them had suffered, when they lately travelled the road they were now passing so gaily.

The evening was serene, the air refreshing, the sky clear, and the flowers exhaled their fragrance. The beams of the declining sun, whose mild splendour reposed on the summit of the mountain, shed a glow of ruddy light over its green declivity, and the white flocks sporting upon it. No sounds were heard, save the murmurs of the four fountains; and the reeds and voices of shepherds, calling to each other from different eminences.

The lovely innocents, destined for the sacrifice, added not a little to the hilarity of the scene. They approached the plain full of sportiveness, some coursing butterflies,

others culling flowers, or picking up the shining little pebbles that attracted their notice. At intervals they nimbly started from each other for the sake of being caught again, and mutually imparting a thousand caresses.

The dreadful chasm, at whose bottom the portal of ebony was placed, began to appear at a distance. It looked like a black streak that divided the plain. Morakanabad and his companions took it for some work which the caliph had ordered. Unhappy men! little did they surmise for what it was destined. Vathek, unwilling that they should examine it too nearly, stopped the procession, and ordered a spacious circle to be formed on this side, at some distance from the accursed chasm. The body-guard of eunuchs was detached, to measure out the lists intended for the games, and prepare the rings for the arrows of the young archers. The fifty competitors were soon stripped, and presented to the admiration of the spectators the suppleness and grace of their delicate limbs. Their eyes sparkled with a joy, which those of their fond parents reflected. Every one offered wishes for the little candidate nearest his heart, and doubted not of his being victorious. A breathless suspense awaited the contests of these amiable and innocent victims.

The caliph, availing himself of the first moment to retire from the crowd, advanced towards the chasm; and there heard, yet not without shuddering, the voice of the Indian; who, gnashing his teeth, eagerly demanded, — "Where are they? — Where are they? — perceivest thou not how my mouth waters?" — "Relentless Giaour!" answered Vathek, with emotion; "can nothing content thee but the massacre of these lovely victims? Ah! wert thou to behold their beauty, it must certainly move thy compassion." — "Perdition on thy compassion, babbler!" cried the Indian: "give them me; instantly give them, or, my portal shall be closed against thee for ever!" — "Not so loudly," replied the caliph, blushing. — "I understand thee," returned the Giaour with the grin of an ogre; "thou wantest no presence of mind: I will, for a moment, forbear."

During this exquisite dialogue, the games went forward

with all alacrity, and at length concluded, just as the twilight began to overcast the mountains. Vathek, who was still standing on the edge of the chasm, called out, with all his might,—"Let my fifty little favourites approach me, separately; and let them come in the order of their success. To the first, I will give my diamond bracelet; to the second, my collar of emeralds; to the third, my aigret of rubies; to the fourth, my girdle of topazes; and to the rest, each a part of my dress, even down to my slippers."

This declaration was received with reiterated acclamations; and all extolled the liberality of a prince, who would thus strip himself, for the amusement of his subjects, and the encouragement of the rising generation. The caliph, in the mean while, undressed himself by degrees; and, raising his arm as high as he was able, made each of the prizes glitter in the air; but, whilst he delivered it, with one hand, to the child, who sprung forward to receive it, he, with the other, pushed the poor innocent into the gulf; where the Giaour, with a sullen muttering, incessantly repeated, "More! more!"

This dreadful device was executed with so much dexterity, that the boy who was approaching him remained unconscious of the fate of his forerunner; and, as to the spectators, the shades of evening, together with their distance, precluded them from perceiving any object distinctly. Vathek, having in this manner thrown in the last of the fifty, and, expecting that the Giaour, on receiving him, would have presented the key, already fancied himself as great as Soliman, and, consequently, above being amenable for what he had done; when, to his utter amazement, the chasm closed, and the ground became as entire as the rest of the plain.

No language could express his rage and despair. He execrated the perfidy of the Indian; loaded him with the most infamous invectives; and stamped with his foot, as resolving to be heard. He persisted in this till his strength failed him, and then fell on the earth like one void of sense. His vizirs and grandees, who were nearer than the rest, supposed him, at first, to be sitting on the grass, at

play with their amiable children; but, at length, prompted by doubt, they advanced towards the spot, and found the caliph alone, who wildly demanded what they wanted? "Our children! our children!" cried they. "It is, assuredly, pleasant," said he, "to make me accountable for accidents. Your children, while at play, fell from the precipice, and I should have experienced their fate, had I not suddenly started back."

At these words, the fathers of the fifty boys cried out aloud; the mothers repeated their exclamations an octave higher; whilst the rest, without knowing the cause, soon drowned the voices of both, with still louder lamentations of their own. "Our caliph," said they, and the report soon circulated, "our caliph has played us this trick, to gratify his accursed Giaour. Let us punish him for perfidy! let us avenge ourselves! let us avenge the blood of the innocent! let us throw this cruel prince into the gulf that is near, and let his name be mentioned no more!"

At this rumour and these menaces, Carathis, full of consternation, hastened to Morakanabad, and said, "Vizir, you have lost two beautiful boys, and must necessarily be the most afflicted of fathers; but you are virtuous, save your master."—"I will brave every hazard," replied the vizir, "to rescue him from his present danger; but, afterwards, will abandon him to his fate. Bababalouk," continued he, "put yourself at the head of your eunuchs: disperse the mob, and, if possible, bring back this unhappy prince to his palace." Bababalouk and his fraternity, felicitating each other in a low voice on their having been spared the cares as well as the honour of paternity, obeyed the mandate of the vizir; who, seconding their exertions to the utmost of his power, at length accomplished his generous enterprise; and retired, as he resolved, to lament at his leisure.

No sooner had the caliph re-entered his palace than Carathis commanded the doors to be fastened; but perceiving the tumult to be still violent, and hearing the imprecations which resounded from all quarters, she said to her son,—"Whether the populace be right or wrong, it

behoves you to provide for your safety; let us retire to your own apartment, and, from thence, through the subterranean passage, known only to ourselves, into your tower: there, with the assistance of the mutes who never leave it, we may be able to make a powerful resistance. Bababalouk, supposing us to be still in the palace, will guard its avenues, for his own sake; and we shall soon find, without the counsels of that blubberer Morakanabad, what expedient may be the best to adopt."

Vathek, without making the least reply, acquiesced in his mother's proposal, and repeated as he went, "Nefarious Giaour! where art thou? hast thou not yet devoured those poor children? where are thy sabres? thy golden key? thy talismans?" — Carathis, who guessed from these interrogations a part of the truth, had no difficulty to apprehend in getting at the whole as soon as he should be a little composed in his tower. This princess was so far from being influenced by scruples, that she was as wicked as woman could be, which is not saying a little; for the sex pique themselves on their superiority in every competition. The recital of the caliph, therefore, occasioned neither terror nor surprise to his mother: she felt no emotion but from the promises of the Giaour, and said to her son, "This Giaour, it must be confessed, is somewhat sanguinary in his taste; but the terrestrial powers are always terrible; nevertheless, what the one hath promised, and the others can confer, will prove a sufficient indemnification. No crimes should be thought too dear for such a reward: forbear, then, to revile the Indian; you have not fulfilled the conditions to which his services are annexed: for instance; is not a sacrifice to the subterranean Genii required? and should we not be prepared to offer it as soon as the tumult is subsided? This charge I will take on myself, and have no doubt of succeeding, by means of your treasures, which, as there are now so many others in store, may without fear be exhausted." Accordingly, the princess, who possessed the most consummate skill in the art of persuasion, went immediately back through the subterranean passage; and, presenting herself to the populace from a window of the palace, began to harangue them with all the

address of which she was mistress; whilst Bababalouk showered money from both hands amongst the crowd, who by these united means were soon appeased. Every person retired to his home, and Carathis returned to the tower.

Prayer at break of day was announced, when Carathis and Vathek ascended the steps which led to the summit of the tower, where they remained for some time, though the weather was lowering and wet. This impending gloom corresponded with their malignant dispositions; but when the sun began to break through the clouds, they ordered a pavilion to be raised, as a screen against the intrusion of his beams. The caliph, overcome with fatigue, sought refreshment from repose; at the same time, hoping that significant dreams might attend on his slumbers; whilst the indefatigable Carathis, followed by a party of her mutes, descended to prepare whatever she judged proper, for the oblation of the approaching night.

By secret stairs, contrived within the thickness of the wall, and known only to herself and her son, she first repaired to the mysterious recesses in which were deposited the mummies that had been wrested from the catacombs of the ancient Pharaohs. Of these she ordered several to be taken. From thence she resorted to a gallery, where, under the guard of fifty female negroes mute and blind of the right eye, were preserved the oil of the most venomous serpents; rhinoceros' horns; and woods of a subtile and penetrating odour, procured from the interior of the Indies, together with a thousand other horrible rarities. This collection had been formed for a purpose like the present, by Carathis herself; from a presentiment, that she might, one day, enjoy some intercourse with the infernal powers, to whom she had ever been passionately attached, and to whose taste she was no stranger.

To familiarise herself the better with the horrors in view, the princess remained in the company of her negresses, who squinted in the most amiable manner from the only eye they had; and leered, with exquisite delight, at the skulls and skeletons which Carathis had drawn forth from her cabinets; all of them making the most frightful contortions, and uttering such shrill chatterings, that the princess,

stunned by them and suffocated by the potency of the exhalations, was forced to quit the gallery, after stripping it of a part of its abominable treasures.

Whilst she was thus occupied, the caliph, who, instead of the visions he expected, had acquired in these unsubstantial regions a voracious appetite, was greatly provoked at the mutes. For having totally forgotten their deafness, he had impatiently asked them for food; and seeing them regardless of his demand, he began to cuff, pinch, and bite them, till Carathis arrived to terminate a scene so indecent, to the great content of these miserable creatures: — "Son! what means all this?" said she, panting for breath. "I thought I heard as I came up the shrieks of a thousand bats, torn from their crannies in the recesses of a cavern; and it was the outcry only of these poor mutes, whom you were so unmercifully abusing. In truth, you but ill deserve the admirable provision I have brought you." — "Give it me instantly," exclaimed the caliph; "I am perishing for hunger!" — "As to that," answered she, "you must have an excellent stomach if it can digest what I have brought." — "Be quick," replied the caliph; — "but, oh heavens! what horrors! what do you intend?" — "Come, come," returned Carathis, "be not so squeamish; but help me to arrange every thing properly; and you shall see that, what you reject with such symptoms of disgust, will soon complete your felicity. Let us get ready the pile for the sacrifice of to-night; and think not of eating till that is performed: know you not, that all solemn rites ought to be preceded by a rigorous abstinence?"

The caliph, not daring to object, abandoned himself to grief and the wind that ravaged his entrails, whilst his mother went forward with the requisite operations. Phials of serpents' oil, mummies, and bones, were soon set in order on the balustrade of the tower. The pile began to rise; and in three hours was twenty cubits high. At length darkness approached; and Carathis, having stripped herself to her inmost garment, clapped her hands in an impulse of ecstasy; the mutes followed her example; but Vathek, extenuated with hunger and impatience, was unable to support himself, and fell down in a swoon. The sparks had

already kindled the dry wood; the venomous oil burst into a thousand blue flames; the mummies, dissolving, emitted a thick dun vapour; and the rhinoceros' horns, beginning to consume, all together diffused such a stench, that the caliph, recovering, started from his trance, and gazed wildly on the scene in full blaze around him. The oil gushed forth in a plenitude of streams; and the negresses, who supplied it without intermission, united their cries to those of the princess. At last the fire became so violent, and the flames reflected from the polished marble so dazzling, that the caliph, unable to withstand the heat and the blaze, effected his escape, and took shelter under the imperial standard.

In the mean time, the inhabitants of Samarah, scared at the light which shone over the city, arose in haste, ascended their roofs, beheld the tower on fire, and hurried, half naked, to the square. Their love for their sovereign immediately awoke; and, apprehending him in danger of perishing in his tower, their whole thoughts were occupied with the means of his safety. Morakanabad flew from his retirement, wiped away his tears, and cried out for water like the rest. Bababalouk, whose olfactory nerves were more familiarised to magical odours, readily conjecturing that Carathis was engaged in her favourite amusements, strenuously exhorted them not to be alarmed. Him, however, they treated as an old poltroon, and styled him a rascally traitor. The camels and dromedaries were advancing with water; but no one knew by which way to enter the tower. Whilst the populace was obstinate in forcing the doors, a violent north-east wind drove an immense volume of flame against them. At first they recoiled, but soon came back with redoubled zeal. At the same time, the stench of the horns and mummies increasing, most of the crowd fell backward in a state of suffocation. Those that kept their feet mutually wondered at the cause of the smell, and admonished each other to retire. Morakanabad, more sick than the rest, remained in a piteous condition. Holding his nose with one hand, every one persisted in his efforts with the other to burst open the doors and obtain admission. A hundred and forty of the strongest and most resolute at length accomplished

their purpose. Having gained the staircase, by their violent exertions, they attained a great height in a quarter of an hour.

Carathis, alarmed at the signs of her mutes, advanced to the staircase; went down a few steps, and heard several voices calling out from below, — "You shall in a moment have water!" Being rather alert, considering her age, she presently regained the top of the tower, and bade her son suspend the sacrifice for some minutes; adding, — "We shall soon be enabled to render it more grateful. Certain dolts of your subjects, imagining, no doubt, that we were on fire, have been rash enough to break through those doors which had hitherto remained inviolate, for the sake of bringing up water. They are very kind, you must allow, so soon to forget the wrongs you have done them; but that is of little moment. Let us offer them to the Giaour, — let them come up; our mutes, who neither want strength nor experience, will soon despatch them, exhausted as they are with fatigue." — "Be it so," answered the caliph, "provided we finish, and I dine." In fact, these good people, out of breath from ascending fifteen hundred stairs in such haste, and chagrined at having spilt by the way the water they had taken, were no sooner arrived at the top, than the blaze of the flames, and the fumes of the mummies, at once overpowered their senses. It was a pity! for they beheld not the agreeable smile with which the mutes and negresses adjusted the cord to their necks: these amiable personages rejoiced, however, no less at the scene. Never before had the ceremony of strangling been performed with so much facility. They all fell, without the least resistance or struggle: so that Vathek, in the space of a few moments, found himself surrounded by the dead bodies of the most faithful of his subjects; all which were thrown on the top of the pile. Carathis, whose presence of mind never forsook her, perceiving that she had carcasses sufficient to complete her oblation, commanded the chains to be stretched across the stair case, and the iron doors barricadoed, that no more might come up.

No sooner were these orders obeyed, than the tower shook; the dead bodies vanished in the flames; which, at

once, changed from a swarthy crimson to a bright rose colour; an ambient vapour emitted the most exquisite fragrance; the marble columns rang with harmonious sounds, and the liquified horns diffused a delicious perfume. Carathis, in transports, anticipated the success of her enterprise; whilst her mutes and negresses, to whom these sweets had given the cholic, retired grumbling to their cells.

Scarcely were they gone, when, instead of the pile, horns, mummies, and ashes, the caliph both saw and felt, with a degree of pleasure which he could not express, a table covered with the most magnificent repast: flagons of wine and vases of exquisite sherbet reposing on snow. He availed himself, without scruple, of such an entertainment; and had already laid hands on a lamb stuffed with pistachios, whilst Carathis was privately drawing from a filigreen urn a parchment that seemed to be endless, and which had escaped the notice of her son. Totally occupied in gratifying an importunate appetite, he left her to peruse it without interruption; which having finished, she said to him, in an authoritative tone, "Put an end to your gluttony, and hear the splendid promises with which you are favoured!" She then read as follows: — "Vathek, my well-beloved, thou hast surpassed my hopes: my nostrils have been regaled by the savour of thy mummies, thy horns, and, still more, by the lives devoted on the pile. At the full of the moon, cause the bands of thy musicians, and thy tymbals, to be heard; depart from thy palace, surrounded by all the pageants of majesty; thy most faithful slaves; thy best beloved wives; thy most magnificent litters; thy richest loaden camels; and set forward on thy way to Istakhar. There I await thy coming: that is the region of wonders: there shalt thou receive the diadem of Gian Ben Gian; the talismans of Soliman; and the treasures of the pre-adamite sultans: there shalt thou be solaced with all kinds of delight. — But beware how thou enterest any dwelling on thy route; or thou shalt feel the effects of my anger."

The caliph, notwithstanding his habitual luxury, had never before dined with so much satisfaction. He gave

full scope to the joy of these golden tidings; and betook himself to drinking anew. Carathis, whose antipathy to wine was by no means insuperable, failed not to pledge him at every bumper he ironically quaffed to the health of Mahomet. This infernal liquor completed their impious temerity, and prompted them to utter a profusion of blasphemies. They gave a loose to their wit, at the expense of the ass of Balaam, the dog of the seven sleepers, and the other animals admitted into the paradise of Mahomet. In this sprightly humour, they descended the fifteen hundred stairs, diverting themselves, as they went, at the anxious faces they saw on the square, through the barbacans and loopholes of the tower; and at length arrived at the royal apartments, by the subterranean passage. Bababalouk was parading to and fro, and issuing his mandates with great pomp to the eunuchs, who were snuffing the lights and painting the eyes of the Circassians. No sooner did he catch sight of the caliph and his mother, than he exclaimed,—"Hah! you have then, I perceive, escaped from the flames; I was not, however, altogether out of doubt."—"Of what moment is it to us what you thought or think?" cried Carathis: "go, speed, tell Morakanabad that we immediately want him; and take care not to stop by the way to make your insipid reflections."

Morakanabad delayed not to obey the summons, and was received by Vathek and his mother with great solemnity. They told him, with an air of composure and commiseration, that the fire at the top of the tower was extinguished; but that it had cost the lives of the brave people who sought to assist them.

"Still more misfortunes!" cried Morakanabad, with a sigh. "Ah, commander of the faithful, our holy prophet is certainly irritated against us! it behoves you to appease him."—"We will appease him, hereafter," replied the caliph, with a smile that augured nothing of good. "You will have leisure sufficient for your supplications during my absence, for this country is the bane of my health. I am disgusted with the mountain of the four fountains, and am resolved to go and drink of the stream of Rocnabad. I

long to refresh myself in the delightful valleys which it waters. Do you, with the advice of my mother, govern my dominions, and take care to supply whatever her experiments may demand; for you well know that our tower abounds in materials for the advancement of science."

The tower but ill suited Morakanabad's taste. Immense treasures had been lavished upon it; and nothing had he ever seen carried thither but female negroes, mutes, and abominable drugs. Nor did he know well what to think of Carathis, who, like a chameleon, could assume all possible colours. Her cursed eloquence had often driven the poor Mussulman to his last shifts. He considered, however, that if she possessed but few good qualities, her son had still fewer; and that the alternative, on the whole, would be in her favour. Consoled, therefore, with this reflection, he went, in good spirits, to soothe the populace, and make the proper arrangements for his master's journey.

Vathek, to conciliate the spirits of the subterranean palace, resolved that his expedition should be uncommonly splendid. With this view he confiscated, on all sides, the property of his subjects; whilst his worthy mother stripped the seraglios she visited of the gems they contained. She collected all the sempstresses and embroiderers of Samarah and other cities, to the distance of sixty leagues, to prepare pavilions, palanquins, sofas, canopies, and litters for the train of the monarch. There was not left, in Masulipatan, a single piece of chintz; and so much muslin had been brought up to dress out Bababalouk and the other black eunuchs, that there remained not an ell of it in the whole Irak of Babylon.

During these preparations, Carathis, who never lost sight of her great object, which was to obtain favour with the powers of darkness, made select parties of the fairest and most delicate ladies of the city; but in the midst of their gaiety, she contrived to introduce vipers amongst them, and to break pots of scorpions under the table. They all bit to a wonder; and Carathis would have left her friends to die, were it not that, to fill up the time, she

now and then amused herself in curing their wounds, with an excellent anodyne of her own invention; for this good princess abhorred being indolent.

Vathek, who was not altogether so active as his mother, devoted his time to the sole gratification of his senses, in the palaces which were severally dedicated to them. He disgusted himself no more with the divan, or the mosque. One half of Samarah followed his example, whilst the other lamented the progress of corruption.

In the midst of these transactions, the embassy returned, which had been sent, in pious times, to Mecca. It consisted of the most reverend moullahs who had fulfilled their commission, and brought back one of those precious besoms which are used to sweep the sacred Cahaba; a present truly worthy of the greatest potentate on earth!

The caliph happened at this instant to be engaged in an apartment by no means adapted to the reception of embassies. He heard the voice of Bababalouk, calling out from between the door and the tapestry that hung before it,—"Here are the excellent Edris al Shafei, and the seraphic Al Mouhateddin, who have brought the besom from Mecca, and, with tears of joy, entreat they may present it to your majesty in person."—"Let them bring the besom hither, it may be of use," said Vathek.—"How!" answered Bababalouk, half aloud and amazed.—"Obey," replied the caliph, "for it is my sovereign will; go instantly, vanish! for here will I receive the good folk who have thus filled thee with joy."

The eunuch departed muttering, and bade the venerable train attend him. A sacred rapture was diffused amongst these reverend old men. Though fatigued with the length of their expedition, they followed Bababalouk with an alertness almost miraculous, and felt themselves highly flattered, as they swept along the stately porticoes, that the caliph would not receive them like ambassadors in ordinary in his hall of audience. Soon reaching the interior of the harem, (where, through blinds of Persian, they perceived large soft eyes, dark and blue, that came and went like lightning,) penetrated with respect and wonder, and full of their celestial mission, they advanced in procession

towards the small corridors that appeared to terminate in nothing, but, nevertheless, led to the cell where the caliph expected their coming.

"What! is the commander of the faithful sick?" said Edris al Shafei, in a low voice to his companion.—"I rather think he is in his oratory," answered Al Mouhateddin. Vathek, who heard the dialogue, cried out,—"What imports it you, how I am employed? approach without delay." They advanced, whilst the caliph, without showing himself, put forth his hand from behind the tapestry that hung before the door, and demanded of them the besom. Having prostrated themselves as well as the corridor would permit, and even in a tolerable semicircle, the venerable Al Shafei, drawing forth the besom from the embroidered and perfumed scarves, in which it had been enveloped, and secured from the profane gaze of vulgar eyes, arose from his associates, and advanced, with an air of the most awful solemnity, towards the supposed oratory; but with what astonishment! with what horror was he seized! Vathek, bursting out into a villanous laugh, snatched the besom from his trembling hand, and, fixing upon some cobwebs, that hung from the ceiling, gravely brushed them away till not a single one remained. The old men, overpowered with amazement, were unable to lift their beards from the ground; for, as Vathek had carelessly left the tapestry between them half drawn, they were witnesses of the whole transaction. Their tears bedewed the marble. Al Mouhateddin swooned through mortification and fatigue, whilst the caliph, throwing himself backward on his seat, shouted, and clapped his hands without mercy. At last, addressing himself to Bababalouk,—"My dear black," said he, "go, regale these pious poor souls with my good wine from Shiraz, since they can boast of having seen more of my palace than any one besides." Having said this, he threw the besom in their face, and went to enjoy the laugh with Carathis. Bababalouk did all in his power to console the ambassadors; but the two most infirm expired on the spot: the rest were carried to their beds, from whence, being heartbroken with sorrow and shame, they never arose.

The succeeding night, Vathek, attended by his mother, ascended the tower to see if every thing were ready for his journey; for he had great faith in the influence of the stars. The planets appeared in their most favourable aspects. The caliph, to enjoy so flattering a sight, supped gaily on the roof; and fancied that he heard, during his repast, loud shouts of laughter resound through the sky, in a manner that inspired the fullest assurance.

All was in motion at the palace; lights were kept burning through the whole of the night: the sound of implements, and of artisans finishing their work; the voices of women, and their guardians, who sung at their embroidery; all conspired to interrupt the stillness of nature, and infinitely delighted the heart of Vathek, who imagined himself going in triumph to sit upon the throne of Soliman. The people were not less satisfied than himself: all assisted to accelerate the moment, which should rescue them from the wayward caprices of so extravagant a master.

The day preceding the departure of this infatuated prince was employed by Carathis in repeating to him the decrees of the mysterious parchment, which she had thoroughly gotten by heart; and in recommending him not to enter the habitation of any one by the way:—"For well thou knowest," added she, "how liquorish thy taste is after good dishes and young damsels: let me, therefore, enjoin thee to be content with thy old cooks, who are the best in the world; and not to forget that, in thy ambulatory seraglio, there are at least three dozen of pretty faces which Bababalouk had not yet unveiled. I myself have a great desire to watch over thy conduct, and visit the subterranean palace, which, no doubt, contains whatever can interest persons like us. There is nothing so pleasing as retiring to caverns: my taste for dead bodies, and every thing like mummy, is decided; and, I am confident, thou wilt see the most exquisite of their kind. Forget me not then, but the moment thou art in possession of the talismans which are to open the way to the mineral kingdoms and the centre of the earth itself, fail not to despatch some trusty genius to take me and my cabinet; for the oil of

the serpents I have pinched to death will be a pretty present to the Giaour, who cannot but be charmed with such dainties.

Scarcely had Carathis ended this edifying discourse, when the sun, setting behind the mountain of the four fountains, gave place to the rising moon. This planet, being that evening at full, appeared of unusual beauty and magnitude in the eyes of the women, the eunuchs, and the pages, who were all impatient to set forward. The city re-echoed with shouts of joy, and flourishing of trumpets. Nothing was visible but plumes nodding on pavilions, and aigrets shining in the mild lustre of the moon. The spacious square resembled an immense parterre variegated with the most stately tulips of the East.

Arrayed in the robes which were only worn at the most distinguished ceremonials, and supported by his vizir and Bababalouk, the caliph descended the great staircase of the tower in the sight of all his people. He could not forbear pausing, at intervals, to admire the superb appearance which every where courted his view; whilst the whole multitude, even to the camels with their sumptuous burdens, knelt down before him. For some time a general stillness prevailed, which nothing happened to disturb, but the shrill screams of some eunuchs in the rear. These vigilant guards, having remarked certain cages of the ladies swagging somewhat awry, and discovered that a few adventurous gallants had contrived to get in, soon dislodged the enraptured culprits, and consigned them, with good commendations, to the surgeons of the serail. The majesty of so magnificent a spectacle was not, however, violated by incidents like these. Vathek, meanwhile, saluted the moon with an idolatrous air, that neither pleased Morakanabad, nor the doctors of the law, any more than the vizirs and grandees of his court, who were all assembled to enjoy the last view of their sovereign.

At length, the clarions and trumpets from the top of the tower announced the prelude of departure. Though the instruments were in unison with each other, yet a singular dissonance was blended with their sounds. This proceeded from Carathis, who was singing her direful orisons to the

Giaour, whilst the negresses and mutes supplied thorough bass, without articulating a word. The good Mussulmans fancied that they heard the sullen hum of those nocturnal insects, which presage evil; and importuned Vathek to beware how he ventured his sacred person.

On a given signal, the great standard of the Califat was displayed: twenty thousand lances shone around it; and the caliph, treading royally on the cloth of gold, which had been spread for his feet, ascended his litter amidst the general acclamations of his subjects.

The expedition commenced with the utmost order, and so entire a silence, that even the locusts were heard from the thickets on the plain of Catoul. Gaiety and good humour prevailing, they made full six leagues before the dawn; and the morning star was still glittering in the firmament, when the whole of this numerous train had halted on the banks of the Tigris, where they encamped to repose for the rest of the day.

The three days that followed were spent in the same manner; but on the fourth the heavens looked angry: lightnings broke forth in frequent flashes; re-echoing peals of thunder succeeded; and the trembling Circassians clung with all their might to their ugly guardians. The caliph himself was greatly inclined to take shelter in the large town of Ghulchissar, the governor of which came forth to meet him, and tendered every kind of refreshment the place could supply. But, having examined his tablets, he suffered the rain to soak him almost to the bone, notwithstanding the importunity of his first favourites. Though he began to regret the palace of the senses, yet he lost not sight of his enterprise, and his sanguine expectation confirmed his resolution. His geographers were ordered to attend him; but the weather proved so terrible that these poor people exhibited a lamentable appearance: and their maps of the different countries, spoiled by the rain, were in a still worse plight than themselves. As no long journey had been undertaken since the time of Haroun al Raschid, every one was ignorant which way to turn; and Vathek, though well versed in the course of the heavens, no longer knew his situation on earth. He

thundered even louder than the elements; and muttered forth certain hints of the bow-string, which were not very soothing to literary ears. Disgusted at the toilsome weariness of the way, he determined to cross over the craggy heights, and follow the guidance of a peasant, who undertook to bring him, in four days, to Rocnabad. Remonstrances were all to no purpose: his resolution was fixed.

The females and eunuchs uttered shrill wailings at the sight of the precipices below them, and the dreary prospects that opened in the vast gorges of the mountains. Before they could reach the ascent of the steepest rock, night overtook them, and a boisterous tempest arose, which, having rent the awnings of the palanquins and cages, exposed to the raw gusts the poor ladies within, who had never before felt so piercing a cold. The dark clouds that overcast the face of the sky deepened the horrors of this disastrous night, insomuch that nothing could be heard distinctly but the mewling of pages and lamentations of sultanas.

To increase the general misfortune, the frightful uproar of wild beasts resounded at a distance; and there were soon perceived in the forest they were skirting the glaring of eyes, which could belong only to devils or tigers. The pioneers, who, as well as they could, had marked out a track, and a part of the advanced guard, were devoured before they had been in the least apprised of their danger. The confusion that prevailed was extreme. Wolves, tigers, and other carnivorous animals, invited by the howling of their companions, flocked together from every quarter. The crashing of bones was heard on all sides, and a fearful rush of wings over head; for now vultures also began to be of the party.

The terror at length reached the main body of the troops which surrounded the monarch and his harem at the distance of two leagues from the scene. Vathek (voluptuously reposed in his capacious litter upon cushions of silk, with two little pages beside him of complexions more fair than the enamel of Franguistan, who were occupied in keeping off flies), was soundly asleep, and contemplating in

his dreams the treasures of Soliman. The shrieks, however, of his wives awoke him with a start; and, instead of the Giaour with his key of gold, he beheld Bababalouk full of consternation. "Sire," exclaimed this good servant of the most potent of monarchs, "misfortune is arrived at its height; wild beasts, who entertain no more reverence for your sacred person than for a dead ass, have beset your camels and their drivers; thirty of the most richly laden are already become their prey, as well as your confectioners, your cooks, and purveyors; and unless our holy Prophet should protect us, we shall have all eaten our last meal." At the mention of eating, the caliph lost all patience. He began to bellow, and even beat himself (for there was no seeing in the dark). The rumour every instant increased; and Bababalouk, finding no good could be done with his master, stopped both his ears against the hurlyburly of the harem, and called out aloud,—"Come, ladies and brothers! all hands to work: strike light in a moment! never shall it be said, that the commander of the faithful served to regale these infidel brutes." Though there wanted not, in this bevy of beauties, a sufficient number of capricious and wayward, yet, on the present occasion, they were all compliance. Fires were visible, in a twinkling, in all their cages. Ten thousand torches were lighted at once. The caliph, himself, seized a large one of wax: every person followed his example; and by kindling ropes' ends, dipped in oil, and fastened on poles, an amazing blaze was spread. The rocks were covered with the splendour of sunshine. The trails of sparks, wafted by the wind, communicated to the dry fern, of which there was plenty. Serpents were observed to crawl forth from their retreats, with amazement and hissings; whilst the horses snorted, stamped the ground, tossed their noses in the air, and plunged about without mercy.

One of the forests of cedar that bordered their way took fire; and the branches that overhung the path, extending their flames to the muslins and chintzes which covered the cages of the ladies, obliged them to jump out, at the peril of their necks. Vathek, who vented on the

occasion a thousand blasphemies, was himself compelled to touch, with his sacred feet, the naked earth.

Never had such an incident happened before. Full of mortification, shame, and despondence, and not knowing how to walk, the ladies fell into the dirt. "Must I go on foot?" said one. "Must I wet my feet?" cried another. "Must I soil my dress?" asked a third. "Execrable Bababalouk!" exclaimed all. "Outcast of hell! what hast thou to do with torches? Better were it to be eaten by tigers, than to fall into our present condition! we are for ever undone! Not a porter is there in the army, nor a currier of camels, but hath seen some part of our bodies; and, what is worse, our very faces!" On saying this the most bashful amongst them hid their foreheads on the ground, whilst such as had more boldness flew at Bababalouk; but he, well apprised of their humour, and not wanting in shrewdness, betook himself to his heels along with his comrades, all dropping their torches and striking their tymbals.

It was not less light than in the brightest of the dog-days, and the weather was hot in proportion; but how degrading was the spectacle, to behold the caliph bespattered, like an ordinary mortal! As the exercise of his faculties seemed to be suspended, one of his Ethiopian wives (for he delighted in variety) clasped him in her arms, threw him upon her shoulder like a sack of dates, and, finding that the fire was hemming them in, set off with no small expedition, considering the weight of her burden. The other ladies, who had just learned the use of their feet, followed her: their guards galloped after; and the camel-drivers brought up the rear, as fast as their charge would permit.

They soon reached the spot where the wild beasts had commenced the carnage, but which they had too much good sense not to leave at the approaching of the tumult, having made besides a most luxurious supper. Bababalouk, nevertheless, seized on a few of the plumpest, which were unable to budge from the place, and began to flea them with admirable adroitness. The cavalcade having proceeded so far from the conflagration, that the heat felt

rather grateful than violent, it was immediately resolved on to halt. The tattered chintzes were picked up: the scraps, left by the wolves and tigers, interred; and vengeance was taken on some dozens of vultures, that were too much glutted to rise on the wing. The camels, which had been left unmolested to make sal ammoniac, being numbered, and the ladies once more enclosed in their cages, the imperial tent was pitched on the levellest ground they could find.

Vathek, reposing upon a mattress of down, and tolerably recovered from the jolting of the Ethiopian, who, to his feelings, seemed the roughest trotting jade he had hitherto mounted, called out for something to eat. But, alas! those delicate cakes which had been baked in silver ovens for his royal mouth, those rich manchets, amber comfits, flagons of Schiraz wine, porcelain vases of snow, and grapes from the banks of the Tigris, were all irremediably lost! And nothing had Bababalouk to present in their stead but a roasted wolf, vultures à la daube; aromatic herbs of the most acrid poignancy; rotten truffles, boiled thistles, and such other wild plants as must ulcerate the throat and parch up the tongue. Nor was he better provided in the article of drink; for he could procure nothing to accompany these irritating viands but a few phials of abominable brandy which had been secreted by the scullions in their slippers. Vathek made wry faces at so savage a repast; and Bababalouk answered them with shrugs and contortions. The caliph, however, eat with tolerable appetite; and fell into a nap that lasted six hours.

The splendour of the sun, reflected from the white cliffs of the mountains, in spite of the curtains that enclosed Vathek, at length disturbed his repose. He awoke terrified, and stung to the quick by wormwood-colour flies, which emitted from their wings a suffocating stench. The miserable monarch was perplexed how to act, though his wits were not idle in seeking expedients; whilst Bababalouk lay snoring amidst a swarm of those insects that busily thronged to pay court to his nose. The little pages, famished with hunger, had dropped their fans on the

ground, and exerted their dying voices in bitter reproaches on the caliph, who now, for the first time, heard the language of truth.

Thus stimulated, he renewed his imprecations against the Giaour; and bestowed upon Mahomet some soothing expressions. "Where am I?" cried he: "what are these dreadful rocks—these valleys of darkness? Are we arrived at the horrible Kaf? Is the Simurgh coming to pluck out my eyes, as a punishment for undertaking this impious enterprise?" Having said this he turned himself towards an outlet in the side of his pavilion; but, alas! what objects occurred to his view? on one side, a plain of black sand that appeared to be unbounded; and, on the other, perpendicular crags, bristled over with those abominable thistles, which had so severely lacerated his tongue. He fancied, however, that he perceived amongst the brambles and briars some gigantic flowers, but was mistaken; for these were only the dangling palampores and variegated tatters of his gay retinue. As there were several clefts in the rock from whence water seemed to have flowed, Vathek applied his ear with the hope of catching the sound of some latent torrent; but could only distinguish the low murmurs of his people, who were repining at their journey, and complaining for the want of water. "To what purpose," asked they, "have we been brought hither? hath our caliph another tower to build? or have the relentless afrits, whom Carathis so much loves, fixed their abode in this place?"

At the name of Carathis, Vathek recollected the tablets he had received from his mother; who assured him they were fraught with preternatural qualities, and advised him to consult them as emergencies might require. Whilst he was engaged in turning them over, he heard a shout of joy, and a loud clapping of hands. The curtains of his pavilion were soon drawn back, and he beheld Bababalouk, followed by a troop of his favourities, conducting two dwarfs, each a cubit high; who brought between them a large basket of melons, oranges, and pomegranates. They were singing in the sweetest tones the words that follow:—"We dwell on the top of these rocks, in a cabin of

rushes and canes; the eagles envy us our nest: a small spring supplies us with water for the Abdest, and we daily repeat prayers, which the Prophet approves. We love you, O commander of the faithful! our master, the good Emir Fakreddin, loves you also: he reveres, in your person, the vicegerent of Mahomet. Little as we are, in us he confides: he knows our hearts to be as good as our bodies are contemptible; and hath placed us here to aid those who are bewildered on these dreary mountains. Last night, whilst we were occupied within our cell in reading the holy Koran, a sudden hurricane blew out our lights, and rocked our habitation. For two whole hours, a palpable darkness prevailed; but we heard sounds at a distance, which we conjectured to proceed from the bells of a cafila, passing over the rocks. Our ears were soon filled with deplorable shrieks, frightful roarings, and the sound of tymbals. Chilled with terror, we concluded that the Deggial, with his exterminating angels, had sent forth his plagues on the earth. In the midst of these melancholy reflections, we perceived flames of the deepest red glow in the horizon; and found ourselves, in a few moments, covered with flakes of fire. Amazed at so strange an appearance, we took up the volume dictated by the blessed Intelligence, and, kneeling, by the light of the fire that surrounded us, we recited the verse which says, 'Put no trust in any thing but the mercy of Heaven: there is no help, save in the holy Prophet: the mountain of Kaf, itself, may tremble; it is the power of Alla only that cannot be moved.' After having pronounced these words, we felt consolation, and our minds were hushed into a sacred repose. Silence ensued, and our ears clearly distinguished a voice in the air, saying, — 'Servants of my faithful servant! go down to the happy valley of Fakreddin: tell him that an illustrious opportunity now offers to satiate the thirst of his hospitable heart. The commander of true believers is, this day, bewildered amongst these mountains, and stands in need of thy aid.'—We obeyed, with joy, the angelic mission; and our master, filled with pious zeal, hath culled, with his own hands, these melons, oranges, and pomegranates. He is following

us, with a hundred dromedaries, laden with the purest waters of his fountains; and is coming to kiss the fringe of your consecrated robe, and implore you to enter his humble habitation, which, placed amidst these barren wilds, resembles an emerald set in lead." The dwarfs, having ended their address, remained still standing, and, with hands crossed upon their bosoms, preserved a respectful silence.

Vathek, in the midst of this curious harangue, seized the basket; and, long before it was finished, the fruits had dissolved in his mouth. As he continued to eat, his piety increased; and, in the same breath, he recited his prayers and called for the Koran and sugar.

Such was the state of his mind when the tablets, which were thrown by at the approach of the dwarfs, again attracted his eye. He took them up; but was ready to drop on the ground when he beheld, in large red characters, inscribed by Carathis, these words,—which were, indeed, enough to make him tremble,—"Beware of old doctors and their puny messengers of but one cubit high: distrust their pious frauds; and, instead of eating their melons, empale on a spit the bearers of them. Shouldest thou be such a fool as to visit them, the portal of the subterranean palace will shut in thy face, with such force as shall shake thee asunder: thy body shall be spit upon, and bats will nestle in thy belly."

"To what tends this ominous rhapsody?" cries the caliph; "and must I, then, perish in these deserts with thirst, whilst I may refresh myself in the delicious valley of melons and cucumbers? Accursed be the Giaour with his portal of ebony! he hath made me dance attendance too long already. Besides, who shall prescribe laws to me? I, forsooth, must not enter any one's habitation! Be it so; but what one can I enter that is not my own?" Bababalouk, who lost not a syllable of this soliloquy, applauded it with all his heart; and the ladies, for the first time, agreed with him in opinion.

The dwarfs were entertained, caressed, and seated, with great ceremony, on little cushions of satin. The symmetry of their persons was a subject of admiration; not an inch

of them was suffered to pass unexamined. Knick-knacks and dainties were offered in profusion; but all were declined with respectful gravity. They climbed up the sides of the caliph's seat; and, placing themselves each on one of his shoulders, began to whisper prayers in his ears. Their tongues quivered like aspen leaves; and the patience of Vathek was almost exhausted, when the acclamations of the troops announced the approach of Fakreddin, who was come with a hundred old grey-beards, and as many Korans and dromedaries. They instantly set about their ablutions, and began to repeat the Bismillah. Vathek, to get rid of these officious monitors, followed their example, for his hands were burning.

The good emir, who was punctiliously religious, and likewise a great dealer in compliments, made an harangue five times more prolix and insipid than his little harbingers had already delivered. The caliph, unable any longer to refrain, exclaimed, — "For the love of Mahomet, my dear Fakreddin, have done! let us proceed to your valley, and enjoy the fruits that Heaven hath vouchsafed you." The hint of proceeding put all into motion. The venerable attendants of the emir set forward somewhat slowly, but Vathek having ordered his little pages, in private, to goad on the dromedaries, loud fits of laughter broke forth from the cages; for the unwieldy curvetting of these poor beasts, and the ridiculous distress of their superannuated riders, afforded the ladies no small entertainment.

They descended, however, unhurt into the valley, by the easy slopes which the emir had ordered to be cut in the rock; and already the murmuring of streams and the rustling of leaves began to catch their attention. The cavalcade soon entered a path, which was skirted by flowering shrubs, and extended to a vast wood of palm trees, whose branches overspread a vast building of freestone. This edifice was crowned with nine domes, and adorned with as many portals of bronze, on which was engraven the following inscription: — "This is the asylum of pilgrims, the refuge of travellers, and the depositary of secrets from all parts of the world."

Nine pages, beautiful as the day, and decently clothed

in robes of Egyptian linen, were standing at each door. They received the whole retinue with an easy and inviting air. Four of the most amiable placed the caliph on a magnificent tecthtrevan; four others, somewhat less graceful, took charge of Bababalouk, who capered for joy at the snug little cabin that fell to his share: the pages that remained waited on the rest of the train.

Every man being gone out of sight, the gate of a large enclosure on the right turned on its harmonious hinges; and a young female, of a slender form, came forth. Her light brown hair floated in the hazy breeze of the twilight. A troop of young maidens, like the Pleiades, attended her on tiptoe. They hastened to the pavilions that contained the sultanas; and the young lady, gracefully bending, said to them, — "Charming princesses! every thing is ready; we have prepared beds for your repose, and strewed your apartments with jasmine. No insects will keep off slumber from visiting your eyelids; we will dispel them with a thousand plumes. Come, then, amiable ladies! refresh your delicate feet, and your ivory limbs, in baths of rose-water; and, by the light of perfumed lamps, your servants will amuse you with tales." The sultanas accepted with pleasure these obliging offers, and followed the young lady to the emir's harem; where we must, for a moment, leave them, and return to the caliph.

Vathek found himself beneath a vast dome, illuminated by a thousand lamps of rock crystal: as many vases of the same material, filled with excellent sherbet, sparkled on a large table, where a profusion of viands were spread. Amongst others, were rice boiled in milk of almonds, saffron soups, and lamb à la crême; of all which the caliph was amazingly fond. He took of each as much as he was able; testified his sense of the emir's friendship by the gaiety of his heart; and made the dwarfs dance against their will, — for these little devotees durst not refuse the commander of the faithful. At last, he spread himself on the sofa, and slept sounder than he ever had before.

Beneath this dome a general silence prevailed; for there was nothing to disturb it but the jaws of Bababalouk, who had untrussed himself to eat with greater advantage, being

anxious to make amends for his fast in the mountains. As his spirits were too high to admit of his sleeping, and hating to be idle, he proposed with himself to visit the harem, and repair to his charge of the ladies: to examine if they had been properly lubricated with the balm of Mecca; if their eyebrows and tresses were in order; and, in a word, to perform all the little offices they might need. He sought for a long time together, but without being able to find out the door. He durst not speak aloud, for fear of disturbing the caliph; and not a soul was stirring in the precincts of the palace. He almost despaired of effecting his purpose, when a low whispering just reached his ear. It came from the dwarfs, who were returned to their old occupation, and, for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time in their lives, were reading over the Koran. They very politely invited Bababalouk to be of their party; but his head was full of other concerns. The dwarfs, though not a little scandalised at his dissolute morals, directed him to the apartments he wanted to find. His way thither lay through a hundred dark corridors, along which he groped as he went; and at last began to catch, from the extremity of a passage, the charming gossiping of the women, which not a little delighted his heart. "Ah, ha! what not yet asleep?" cried he; and, taking long strides as he spoke, "did you not suspect me of abjuring my charge?" Two of the black eunuchs, on hearing a voice so loud, left their party in haste, sabre in hand, to discover the cause; but presently was repeated on all sides,—"'T is only Bababalouk! no one but Bababalouk!" This circumspect guardian, having gone up to a thin veil of carnation-colour silk that hung before the doorway, distinguished, by means of the softened splendour that shone through it, an oval bath of dark porphyry, surrounded by curtains, festooned in large folds. Through the apertures between them, as they were not drawn close, groups of young slaves were visible; amongst whom, Bababalouk perceived his pupils, indulgingly expanding their arms, as if to embrace the perfumed water, and refresh themselves after their fatigues. The looks of tender languor; their confidential whispers; and the enchanting smiles with

which they were imparted; the exquisite fragrance of the roses: all combined to inspire a voluptuousness, which even Bababalouk himself was scarce able to withstand.

He summoned up, however, his usual solemnity; and, in the peremptory tone of authority, commanded the ladies, instantly, to leave the bath. Whilst he was issuing these mandates, the young Nouronihar, daughter of the emir, who was as sprightly as an antelope, and full of wanton gaiety, beckoned one of her slaves to let down the great swing which was suspended to the ceiling by cords of silk; and whilst this was doing, winked to her companions in the bath, who, chagrined to be forced from so soothing a state of indolence, began to twist and entangle their hair to plague and detain Bababalouk, and teased him, besides, with a thousand vagaries.

Nouronihar, perceiving that he was nearly out of patience, accosted him, with an arch air of respectful concern, and said, — "My lord! it is not by any means decent that the chief eunuch of the caliph, our sovereign, should thus continue standing; deign but to recline your graceful person upon this sofa, which will burst with vexation if it have not the honour to receive you." Caught by these flattering accents, Bababalouk gallantly replied,— "Delight of the apple of my eye! I accept the invitation of your honied lips; and, to say truth, my senses are dazzled with the radiance that beams from your charms." — "Repose, then, at your ease," replied the beauty; as she placed him on the pretended sofa, which, quicker than lightning, flew up all at once. The rest of the women, having aptly conceived her design, sprang naked from the bath, and plied the swing with such unmerciful jerks that it swept through the whole compass of a very lofty dome, and took from the poor victim all power of respiration. Sometimes his feet rased the surface of the water; and, at others, the skylight almost flattened his nose. In vain did he fill the air with the cries of a voice that resembled the ringing of a cracked jar; their peals of laughter were still predominant.

Nouronihar, in the inebriety of youthful spirits, being used only to eunuchs of ordinary harems, and having never

seen any thing so eminently disgusting, was far more diverted than all of the rest. She began to parody some Persian verses, and sang, with an accent most demurely piquant, — "Oh, gentle white dove! as thou soar'st through the air, vouchsafe one kind glance on the mate of thy love: melodious Philomel, I am thy rose; warble some couplet to ravish my heart!"

The sultanas and their slaves, stimulated by these pleasantries, persevered at the swing with such unremitted assiduity, that at length the cord, which had secured it, snapped suddenly asunder; and Bababalouk fell, floundering like a turtle, to the bottom of the bath. This accident occasioned an universal shout. Twelve little doors, till now unobserved, flew open at once; and the ladies, in an instant, made their escape; but not before having heaped all the towels on his head, and put out the lights that remained.

The deplorable animal, in water to the chin, overwhelmed with darkness, and unable to extricate himself from the wrappers that embarrassed him, was still doomed to hear, for his further consolation, the fresh bursts of merriment his disaster occasioned. He bustled, but in vain, to get from the bath; for the margin was become so slippery with the oil spilt in breaking the lamps, that, at every effort, he slid back with a plunge which resounded aloud through the hollow of the doom. These cursed peals of laughter were redoubled at every relapse, and he, who thought the place infested rather by devils than women, resolved to cease groping, and abide in the bath; where he amused himself with soliloquies, interspersed with imprecations, of which his malicious neighbours, reclining on down, suffered not an accent to escape. In this delectable plight the morning surprised him. The caliph, wondering at his absence, had caused him to be sought for every where. At last, he was drawn forth almost smothered from under the wisp of linen, and wet even to the marrow. Limping, and his teeth chattering with cold, he approached his master; who enquired what was the matter, and how he came soused in so strange a pickle? — "And why did you enter this cursed lodge?" answered Bababalouk,

gruffly. "Ought a monarch like you to visit with his harem the abode of a grey-bearded emir, who knows nothing of life? — And with what gracious damsels doth the place too abound! Fancy to yourself how they have soaked me like a burnt crust; and made me dance like a jack-pudding, the livelong night through, on their damnable swing. What an excellent lesson for your sultanas, into whom I had instilled such reserve and decorum!" Vathek, comprehending not a syllable of all this invective, obliged him to relate minutely the transaction: but, instead of sympathising with the miserable sufferer, he laughed immoderately at the device of the swing and the figure of Bababalouk mounted upon it. The stung eunuch could scarcely preserve the semblance of respect. "Ay, laugh, my lord! laugh," said he; "but I wish this Nourouihar would play some trick on you; she is too wicked to spare even majesty itself." These words made, for the present, but a slight impression on the caliph; but they, not long after, recurred to his mind.

This conversation was cut short by Fakreddin, who came to request that Vathek would join in the prayers and ablutions, to be solemnised on a spacious meadow watered by innumerable streams. The caliph found the waters refreshing, but the prayers abominably irksome. He diverted himself, however, with the multitude of calenders, santons, and derviches, who were continually coming and going; but especially with the bramins, faquirs, and other enthusiasts, who had travelled from the heart of India, and halted on their way with the emir. These latter had each of them some mummery peculiar to himself. One dragged a huge chain wherever he went; another an ouran-outang; whilst a third was furnished with scourges; and all performed to a charm. Some would climb up trees, holding one foot in the air; others poise themselves over a fire, and without mercy fillip their noses. There were some amongst them that cherished vermin, which were not ungrateful in requiting their caresses. These rambling fanatics revolted the hearts of the derviches, the calenders, and santons; however, the vehemence of their aversion soon subsided, under the hope that the presence of the caliph would cure

their folly, and convert them to the Mussulman faith. But, alas! how great was their disappointment! for Vathek, instead of preaching to them, treated them as buffoons, bade them present his compliments to Visnow and Ixhora, and discovered a predilection for a squat old man from the Isle of Serendib, who was more ridiculous than any of the rest. "Come!" said he, "for the love of your gods, bestow a few slaps on your chops to amuse me." The old fellow, offended at such an address, began loudly to weep; but, as he betrayed a villanous drivelling in shedding tears, the caliph turned his back and listened to Bababalouk, who whispered, whilst he held the umbrella over him, — "Your majesty should be cautious of this odd assembly; which hath been collected, I know not for what. Is it necessary to exhibit such spectacles to a mighty potentate, with interludes of talapoins more mangy than dogs? Were I you, I would command a fire to be kindled, and at once rid the estates of the emir, of his harem, and all his menagerie." — "Tush, dolt," answered Vathek, "and know that all this infinitely charms me. Nor shall I leave the meadow, till I have visited every hive of these pious mendicants."

Wherever the caliph directed his course, objects of pity were sure to swarm round him; the blind, the purblind, smarts without noses, damsels without ears, each to extol the munificence of Fakreddin, who, as well as his attendant grey-beards, dealt about, gratis, plasters and cataplasms to all that applied. At noon, a superb corps of cripples made its appearance; and soon after advanced, by platoons, on the plain, the completest association of invalids that had ever been embodied till then. The blind went groping with the blind, the lame limped on together, and the maimed made gestures to each other with the only arm that remained. The sides of a considerable waterfall were crowded by the deaf; amongst whom were some from Pegû, with ears uncommonly handsome and large, but who were still less able to hear than the rest. Nor were there wanting others in abundance with hump-backs, wenny necks, and even horns of an exquisite polish.

The emir, to aggrandise the solemnity of the festival, in

honour of his illustrious visitant, ordered the turf to be spread, on all sides, with skins and table-cloths; upon which were served up for the good Mussulmans pilaus of every hue, with other orthodox dishes; and, by the express order of Vathek, who was shamefully tolerant, small plates of abominations were prepared, to the great scandal of the faithful. The holy assembly began to fall to. The caliph, in spite of every remonstrance from the chief of his eunuchs, resolved to have a dinner dressed on the spot. The complaisant emir immediately gave orders for a table to be placed in the shade of the willows. The first service consisted of fish, which they drew from a river, flowing over sands of gold at the foot of a lofty hill. These were broiled as fast as taken, and served up with a sauce of vinegar, and small herbs that grew on Mount Sinai; for every thing with the emir was excellent and pious.

The dessert was not quite set on, when the sound of lutes, from the hill, was repeated by the echoes of the neighbouring mountains. The caliph, with an emotion of pleasure and surprise, had no sooner raised up his head, than a handful of jasmine dropped on his face. An abundance of tittering succeeded the frolic, and instantly appeared, through the bushes, the elegant forms of several young females, skipping and bounding like roes. The fragrance diffused from their hair struck the sense of Vathek, who, in an ecstasy, suspending his repast, said to Bababalouk,—"Are the peries come down from their spheres? Note her, in particular, whose form is so perfect; venturously running on the brink of the precipice, and turning back her head, as regardless of nothing but the graceful flow of her robe. With what captivating impatience doth she contend with the bushes for her veil? could it be her who threw the jasmine at me?"—"Ay! she it was; and you too would she throw, from the top of the rock," answered Bababalouk, "for that is my good friend Nouronihar, who so kindly lent me her swing. My dear lord and master," added he, wresting a twig from a willow, "let me correct her for her want of respect: the emir will have no reason to complain; since (bating what I owe to his piety) he is much to be blamed for keeping a

troop of girls on the mountains, where the sharpness of the air gives their blood too brisk a circulation."

"Peace! blasphemer," said the caliph; "speak not thus of her, who, over these mountains, leads my heart a willing captive. Contrive, rather, that my eyes may be fixed upon hers; that I may respire her sweet breath as she bounds panting along these delightful wilds!" On saying these words, Vathek extended his arms towards the hill; and directing his eyes, with an anxiety unknown to him before, endeavoured to keep within view the object that enthralled his soul; but her course was as difficult to follow, as the flight of one of those beautiful blue butterflies of Cachemire, which are, at once, so volatile and rare.

The caliph, not satisfied with seeing, wished also to hear Nouronihar, and eagerly turned to catch the sound of her voice. At last, he distinguished her whispering to one of her companions behind the thicket from whence she had thrown the jasmine,—"A caliph, it must be owned, is a fine thing to see; but my little Gulchenrouz is much more amiable: one lock of his hair is of more value to me than the richest embroidery of the Indies. I had rather that his teeth should mischievously press my finger, than the richest ring of the imperial treasure. Where have you left him, Sutlememe? and why is he not here?"

The agitated caliph still wished to hear more; but she immediately retired with all her attendants. The fond monarch pursued her with his eyes till she was gone out of sight; and then continued like a bewildered and benighted traveller, from whom the clouds had obscured the constellation that guided his way. The curtain of night seemed dropped before him: every thing appeared discoloured. The falling waters filled his soul with dejection, and his tears trickled down the jasmines he had caught from Nouronihar, and placed in his inflamed bosom. He snatched up a few shining pebbles, to remind him of the scene where he felt the first tumults of love. Two hours were elapsed, and evening drew on, before he could resolve to depart from the place. He often, but in vain, attempted to go: a soft languor enervated the powers of his mind. Extending himself on the brink of the stream, he turned

his eyes towards the blue summits of the mountain, and exclaimed,—"What concealest thou behind thee, pitiless rock? what is passing in thy solitudes? Whither is she gone? O heaven! perhaps she is now wandering in thy grottoes with her happy Gulchenrouz!"

In the mean time, the damps began to descend; and the emir, solicitous for the health of the caliph, ordered the imperial litter to be brought. Vathek, absorbed in his reveries, was imperceptibly removed and conveyed back to the saloon, that received him the evening before. But let us leave the caliph immersed in his new passion, and attend Nouronihar beyond the rocks where she had again joined her beloved Gulchenrouz.

This Gulchenrouz was the son of Ali Hassan, brother to the emir; and the most delicate and lovely creature in the world. Ali Hassan, who had been absent ten years on a voyage to the unknown seas, committed, at his departure, this child, the only survivor of many, to the care and protection of his brother. Gulchenrouz could write in various characters with precision, and paint upon vellum the most elegant arabesques that fancy could devise. His sweet voice accompanied the lute in the most enchanting manner; and when he sang the loves of Megnoun and Leilah, or some unfortunate lovers of ancient days, tears insensibly overflowed the cheeks of his auditors. The verses he composed (for, like Megnoun, he, too, was a poet,) inspired that unresisting languor, so frequently fatal to the female heart. The women all doted upon him; and, though he had passed his thirteenth year, they still detained him in the harem. His dancing was light as the gossamer waved by the zephyrs of spring; but his arms, which twined so gracefully with those of the young girls in the dance, could neither dart the lance in the chase, nor curb the steeds that pastured in his uncle's domains. The bow, however, he drew with a certain aim, and would have excelled his competitors in the race, could he have broken the ties that bound him to Nouronihar.

The two brothers had mutually engaged their children to each other; and Nouronihar loved her cousin more than her own beautiful eyes. Both had the same tastes and

amusements; the same long, languishing looks; the same tresses; the same fair complexions; and, when Gulchenrouz appeared in the dress of his cousin, he seemed to be more feminine than even herself. If, at any time, he left the harem to visit Fakreddin, it was with all the bashfulness of a fawn, that consciously ventures from the lair of its dam: he was, however, wanton enough to mock the solemn old grey-beards, though sure to be rated without mercy in return. Whenever this happened, he would hastily plunge into the recesses of the harem; and, sobbing, take refuge in the fond arms of Nouronihar, who loved even his faults beyond the virtues of others.

It fell out this evening, that, after leaving the caliph in the meadow, she ran with Gulchenrouz over the green sward of the mountain, that sheltered the vale where Fakreddin had chosen to reside. The sun was dilated on the edge of the horizon; and the young people, whose fancies were lively and inventive, imagined they beheld, in the gorgeous clouds of the west, the domes of Shaddukian and Ambreabad, where the peries have fixed their abode. Nouronihar, sitting on the slope of the hill, supported on her knees the perfumed head of Gulchenrouz. The unexpected arrival of the caliph, and the splendour that marked his appearance, had already filled with emotion the ardent soul of Nouronihar. Her vanity irresistibly prompted her to pique the prince's attention; and this she before took good care to effect, whilst he picked up the jasmine she had thrown upon him. But when Gulchenrouz asked after the flowers he had culled for her bosom, Nouronihar was all in confusion. She hastily kissed his forehead, arose in a flutter, and walked with unequal steps on the border of the precipice. Night advanced, and the pure gold of the setting sun had yielded to a sanguine red; the glow of which, like the reflection of a burning furnace, flushed Nouronihar's animated countenance. Gulchenrouz, alarmed at the agitation of his cousin, said to her, with a supplicating accent,—"Let us begone; the sky looks portentous, the tamarisks tremble more than common, and the raw wind chills my very heart. Come! let us begone; 'tis a melancholy night!" Then taking hold of her hand, he

drew it towards the path he besought her to go. Nouronihar unconsciously followed the attraction; for a thousand strange imaginations occupied her spirits. She passed the large round of honeysuckles, her favourite resort, without ever vouchsafing it a glance; yet Gulchenrouz could not help snatching off a few shoots in his way, though he ran as if a wild beast were behind.

The young females seeing them approach in such haste, and, according to custom, expecting a dance, instantly assembled in a circle and took each other by the hand; but Gulchenrouz, coming up out of breath, fell down at once on the grass. This accident struck with consternation the whole of this frolicsome party; whilst Nouronihar, half distracted and overcome, both by the violence of her exercise, and the tumult of her thoughts, sunk feebly down at his side, cherished his cold hands in her bosom, and chafed his temples with a fragrant perfume. At length he came to himself, and wrapping up his head in the robe of his cousin, entreated that she would not return to the harem. He was afraid of being snapped at by Shaban his tutor, a wrinkled old eunuch of a surly disposition; for, having interrupted the wonted walk of Nouronihar, he dreaded lest the churl should take it amiss. The whole of this sprightly group, sitting round upon a mossy knoll, began to entertain themselves with various pastimes, whilst their superintendents, the eunuchs, were gravely conversing at a distance. The nurse of the emir's daughter, observing her pupil sit ruminating with her eyes on the ground, endeavoured to amuse her with diverting tales; to which Gulchenrouz, who had already forgotten his inquietudes, listened with a breathless attention. He laughed, he clapped his hands, and passed a hundred little tricks on the whole of the company, without omitting the eunuchs, whom he provoked to run after him, in spite of their age and decrepitude.

During these occurrences, the moon arose, the wind subsided, and the evening became so serene and inviting, that a resolution was taken to sup on the spot. One of the eunuchs ran to fetch melons, whilst others were employed in showering down almonds from the branches that

overhung this amiable party. Sutlememe, who excelled in dressing a salad, having filled large bowls of porcelain with eggs of small birds, curds turned with citron juice, slices of cucumber, and the inmost leaves of delicate herbs, handed it round from one to another, and gave each their shares with a large spoon of cocknos. Gulchenrouz, nestling, as usual, in the bosom of Nouronihar, pouted out his vermilion little lips against the offer of Sutlememe; and would take it only from the hand of his cousin, on whose mouth he hung, like a bee inebriated with the nectar of flowers.

In the midst of this festive scene, there appeared a light on the top of the highest mountain, which attracted the notice of every eye. This light was not less bright than the moon when at full, and might have been taken for her, had not the moon already risen. The phenomenon occasioned a general surprise, and no one could conjecture the cause. It could not be a fire, for the light was clear and bluish; nor had meteors ever been seen of that magnitude or splendour. This strange light faded for a moment, and immediately renewed its brightness. It first appeared motionless, at the foot of the rock; whence it darted in an instant, to sparkle in a thicket of palm-trees: from thence it glided along the torrent; and at last fixed in a glen that was narrow and dark. The moment it had taken its direction, Gulchenrouz, whose heart always trembled at any thing sudden or rare, drew Nouronihar by the robe, and anxiously requested her to return to the harem. The women were importunate in seconding the entreaty; but the curiosity of the emir's daughter prevailed. She not only refused to go back, but resolved, at all hazards, to pursue the appearance.

Whilst they were debating what was best to be done, the light shot forth so dazzling a blaze that they all fled away shrieking. Nouronihar followed them a few steps; but, coming to the turn of a little by-path, stopped, and went back alone. As she ran with an alertness peculiar to herself, it was not long before she came to the place, where they had just been supping. The globe of fire now appeared stationary in the glen, and burned in majestic

stillness. Nouronihar, pressing her hands upon her bosom, hesitated, for some moments, to advance. The solitude of her situation was new; the silence of the night awful; and every object inspired sensations which, till then, she never had felt. The affright of Gulchenrouz recurred to her mind, and she a thousand times turned to go back; but this luminous appearance was always before her. Urged on by an irresistible impulse, she continued to approach it, in defiance of every obstacle that opposed her progress.

At length she arrived at the opening of the glen; but, instead of coming up to the light, she found herself surrounded by darkness; excepting that, at a considerable distance, a faint spark glimmered by fits. She stopped a second time: the sound of waterfalls mingling their murmurs, the hollow rustlings among the palm-branches, and the funereal screams of the birds from their rifted trunks, all conspired to fill her soul with terror. She imagined, every moment, that she trod on some venomous reptile. All the stories of malignant dives and dismal goules thronged into her memory; but her curiosity was, notwithstanding, more predominant than her fears. She therefore firmly entered a winding track that led towards the spark; but, being a stranger to the path, she had not gone far, till she began to repent of her rashness. "Alas!" said she, "that I were but in those secure and illuminated apartments, where my evenings glided on with Gulchenrouz! Dear child! how would thy heart flutter with terror, wert thou wandering in these wild solitudes, like me!" Thus speaking, she advanced, and coming up to steps hewn in the rock ascended them undismayed. The light, which was now gradually enlarging, appeared above her on the summit of the mountain, and as if proceeding from a cavern. At length, she distinguished a plaintive and melodious union of voices, that resembled the dirges which are sung over tombs. A sound like that which arises from the filling of baths struck her ear at the same time. She continued ascending, and discovered large wax torches in full blaze, planted here and there in the fissures of the rock. This appearance filled her with fear, whilst

the subtile and potent odour, which the torches exhaled, caused her to sink, almost lifeless, at the entrance of the grot.

Casting her eyes within, in this kind of trance, she beheld a large cistern of gold, filled with a water, the vapour of which distilled on her face a dew of the essence of roses. A soft symphony resounded through the grot. On the sides of the cistern she noticed appendages of royalty, diadems and feathers of the heron, all sparkling with carbuncles. Whilst her attention was fixed on this display of magnificence, the music ceased, and a voice instantly demanded,—" For what monarch are these torches kindled, this bath prepared, and these habiliments which belong not only to the sovereigns of the earth, but even to the talismanic powers?" To which a second voice answered, " They are for the charming daughter of the Emir Fakreddin."—" What," replied the first, " for that trifler, who consumes her time with a giddy child, immersed in softness, and who, at best, can make but a pitiful husband?"—" And can she," rejoined the other voice, " be amused with such empty toys, whilst the caliph, the sovereign of the world, he who is destined to enjoy the treasures of the pre-adamite sultans, a prince six feet high, and whose eyes pervade the inmost soul of a female, is inflamed with love for her? No! she will be wise enough to answer that passion alone that can aggrandise her glory. No doubt she will, and despise the puppet of her fancy. Then all the riches this place contains, as well as the carbuncle of Giamschid, shall be hers."—" You judge right," returned the first voice; " and I haste to Istakhar to prepare the palace of subterranean fire for the reception of the bridal pair."

The voices ceased; the torches were extinguished; the most entire darkness succeeded; and Nouronihar recovering, with a start, found herself reclined on a sofa in the harem of her father. She clapped her hands, and immediately came together Gulchenrouz and her women; who, in despair at having lost her, had despatched eunuchs to seek her in every direction. Shaban appeared with the rest, and began to reprimand her, with an air of conse-

quence:—"Little impertinent," said he, "have you false keys, or are you beloved of some genius that hath given you a picklock? I will try the extent of your power: come to the dark chamber, and expect not the company of Gulchenrouz: be expeditious! I will shut you up, and turn the key twice upon you!" At these menaces, Nouronihar indignantly raised her head, opened on Shaban her black eyes, which, since the important dialogue of the enchanted grot, were considerably enlarged, and said,—"Go, speak thus to slaves; but learn to reverence her who is born to give laws, and subject all to her power."

Proceeding in the same style, she was interrupted by a sudden exclamation of "The caliph! the caliph!" All the curtains were thrown open, the slaves prostrated themselves in double rows, and poor little Gulchenrouz went to hide beneath the couch of a sofa. At first appeared a file of black eunuchs trailing after them long trains of muslin embroidered with gold, and holding in their hands censers, which dispensed, as they passed, the grateful perfume of the wood of aloes. Next marched Bababalouk with a solemn strut, and tossing his head, as not overpleased at the visit. Vathek came close after, superbly robed: his gait was unembarrassed and noble; and his presence would have engaged admiration, though he had not been the sovereign of the world. He approached Nouronihar with a throbbing heart, and seemed enraptured at the full effulgence of her radiant eyes, of which he had before caught but a few glimpses: but she instantly depressed them, and her confusion augmented her beauty.

Bababalouk, who was a thorough adept in coincidences of this nature, and knew that the worst game should be played with the best face, immediately made a signal for all to retire; and no sooner did he perceive beneath the sofa the little one's feet, than he drew him forth without ceremony, set him upon his shoulders, and lavished on him, as he went off, a thousand unwelcome caresses. Gulchenrouz cried out, and resisted till his cheeks became the colour of the blossom of pomegranates, and his tearful eyes sparkled with indignation. He cast a significant glance at Nouronihar, which the caliph noticing, asked,

"Is that, then, your Gulchenrouz?"—"Sovereign of the world!" answered she, "spare my cousin, whose innocence and gentleness deserve not your anger!"—"Take comfort," said Vathek, with a smile: "he is in good hands. Bababalouk is fond of children, and never goes without sweetmeats and comfits." The daughter of Fakreddin was abashed, and suffered Gulchenrouz to be borne away without adding a word. The tumult of her bosom betrayed her confusion, and Vathek becoming still more impassioned, gave a loose to his frenzy; which had only not subdued the last faint strugglings of reluctance, when the emir suddenly bursting in, threw his face upon the ground at the feet of the caliph, and said,—"Commander of the faithful! abase not yourself to the meanness of your slave."—"No, emir," replied Vathek, "I raise her to an equality with myself: I declare her my wife; and the glory of your race shall extend from one generation to another."—"Alas! my lord," said Fakreddin, as he plucked off a few grey hairs of his beard, "cut short the days of your faithful servant, rather than force him to depart from his word. Nouronihar is solemnly promised to Gulchenrouz, the son of my brother Ali Hassan: they are united, also, in heart; their faith is mutually plighted; and affiances, so sacred, cannot be broken."—"What then!" replied the caliph bluntly; "would you surrender this divine beauty to a husband more womanish than herself; and can you imagine, that I will suffer her charms to decay in hands so inefficient and nerveless? No! she is destined to live out her life within my embraces: such is my will; retire, and disturb not the night I devote to the worship of her charms."

The irritated emir drew forth his sabre, presented it to Vathek, and stretching out his neck, said, in a firm tone of voice, "Strike your unhappy host, my lord: he has lived long enough, since he hath seen the Prophet's vicegerent violate the rights of hospitality." At his uttering these words, Nouronihar, unable to support any longer the conflict of her passions, sunk down in a swoon. Vathek, both terrified for her life and furious at an opposition to his will, bade Fakreddin assist his daughter, and withdrew;

darting his terrible look at the unfortunate emir, who suddenly fell backward, bathed in a sweat as cold as the damp of death.

Gulchenrouz, who had escaped from the hands of Babalouk, and was, at that instant, returned, called out for help, as loudly as he could, not having strength to afford it himself. Pale and panting, the poor child attempted to revive Nouronihar by caresses; and it happened, that the thrilling warmth of his lips restored her to life. Fakreddin beginning also to recover from the look of the caliph, with difficulty tottered to a seat; and, after warily casting round his eye, to see if this dangerous prince were gone, sent for Shaban and Sutlememe; and said to them apart,—"My friends! violent evils require violent remedies; the caliph has brought desolation and horror into my family; and how shall we resist his power? Another of his looks will send me to the grave. Fetch, then, that narcotic powder which a dervish brought me from Aracan. A dose of it, the effect of which will continue three days, must be administered to each of these children. The caliph will believe them to be dead; for they will have all the appearance of death. We shall go, as if to inter them in the cave of Meimoune, at the entrance of the great desert of sand, and near the bower of my dwarfs. When all the spectators shall be withdrawn, you, Shaban, and four select eunuchs, shall convey them to the lake; where provision shall be ready to support them a month: for, one day allotted to the surprise this event will occasion; five, to the tears; a fortnight, to reflection; and the rest, to prepare for renewing his progress; will, according to my calculation, fill up the whole time that Vathek will tarry; and I shall, then, be freed from his intrusion."

"Your plan is good," said Sutlememe, "if it can but be effected. I have remarked, that Nouronihar is well able to support the glances of the caliph, and that he is far from being sparing of them to her; be assured, therefore, that, notwithstanding her fondness for Gulchenrouz, she will never remain quiet, while she knows him to be here. Let us persuade her, that both herself and Gulchenrouz are really dead; and, that they were conveyed to those

rocks, for a limited season, to expiate the little faults, of which their love was the cause. We will add, that we killed ourselves in despair; and that your dwarfs, whom they never yet saw, will preach to them delectable sermons. I will engage that every thing shall succeed to the bent of your wishes." —" Be it so!" said Fakreddin: " I approve your proposal: let us lose not a moment to give it effect."

They hastened to seek for the powder, which, being mixed in a sherbet, was immediately administered to Gulchenrouz and Nouronihar. Within the space of an hour, both were seized with violent palpitations; and a general numbness gradually ensued. They arose from the floor where they had remained ever since the caliph's departure; and, ascending to the sofa, reclined themselves upon it, clasped in each other's embraces. " Cherish me, my dear Nouronihar!" said Gulchenrouz: " put thy hand upon my heart; it feels as if it were frozen. Alas! thou art as cold as myself! hath the caliph murdered us both, with his terrible look?" —" I am dying!" cried she, in a faltering voice: " press me closer; I am ready to expire!" — " Let us die, then, together," answered the little Gulchenrouz; whilst his breast laboured with a convulsive sigh: " let me, at least, breathe forth my soul on thy lips!" They spoke no more and became as dead.

Immediately, the most piercing cries were heard through the harem; whilst Shaban and Sutlememe personated, with great adroitness, the parts of persons in despair. The emir, who was sufficiently mortified, to be forced into such untoward expedients, and had now, for the first time, made a trial of his powder, was under no necessity of counterfeiting grief. The slaves, who had flocked together from all quarters, stood motionless, at the spectacle before them. All lights were extinguished, save two lamps, which shed a wan glimmering over the faces of these lovely flowers, that seemed to be faded in the spring-time of life. Funeral vestments were prepared; their bodies were washed with rose-water; their beautiful tresses were braided and incensed; and they were wrapped in symars whiter than alabaster.

At the moment that their attendants were placing two

wreaths of their favourite jasmines on their brows, the caliph, who had just heard the tragical catastrophe, arrived. He looked not less pale and haggard than the goules that wander at night among the graves. Forgetful of himself and every one else, he broke through the midst of the slaves; fell prostrate at the foot of the sofa; beat his bosom; called himself "atrocious murderer!" and invoked upon his head a thousand imprecations. With a trembling hand he raised the veil that covered the countenance of Nouronihar, and uttering a loud shriek, fell lifeless on the floor. The chief of the eunuchs dragged him off, with horrible grimaces, and repeated as he went, "Ay, I foresaw she would play you some ungracious turn!"

No sooner was the caliph gone, than the emir commanded biers to be brought, and forbade that any one should enter the harem. Every window was fastened; all instruments of music were broken; and the imans began to recite their prayers. Towards the close of this melancholy day, Vathek sobbed in silence; for they had been forced to compose with anodynes his convulsions of rage and desperation.

At the dawn of the succeeding morning, the wide folding doors of the palace were set open, and the funeral procession moved forward for the mountain. The wailful cries of "La Ilah illa Alla!" reached the caliph, who was eager to cicatrise himself, and attend the ceremonial; nor could he have been dissuaded, had not his excessive weakness disabled him from walking. At the few first steps he fell on the ground, and his people were obliged to lay him on a bed, where he remained many days in such a state of insensibility as excited compassion in the emir himself.

When the procession was arrived at the grot of Meimoune, Shaban and Sutlememe dismissed the whole of the train, excepting the four confidential eunuchs who were appointed to remain. After resting some moments near the biers, which had been left in the open air; they caused them to be carried to the brink of a small lake, whose banks where overgrown with a hoary moss. This was the great resort of herons and storks, which preyed continually on little blue fishes. The dwarfs, instructed by the emir,

soon repaired thither ; and, with the help of the eunuchs, began to construct cabins of rushes and reeds, a work in which they had admirable skill. A magazine also was contrived for provisions, with a small oratory for themselves, and a pyramid of wood, neatly piled, to furnish the necessary fuel : for the air was bleak in the hollows of the mountains.

At evening two fires were kindled on the brink of the lake, and the two lovely bodies, taken from their biers, were carefully deposited upon a bed of dried leaves, within the same cabin. The dwarfs began to recite the Koran, with their clear shrill voices ; and Shaban and Sutlememe stood at some distance, anxiously waiting the effects of the powder. At length Nouronihar and Gulchenrouz faintly stretched out their arms ; and, gradually opening their eyes, began to survey, with looks of increasing amazement, every object around them. They even attempted to rise ; but, for want of strength, fell back again. Sutlememe, on this, administered a cordial, which the emir had taken care to provide.

Gulchenrouz, thoroughly aroused, sneezed out aloud ; and, raising himself with an effort that expressed his surprise, left the cabin and inhaled the fresh air with the greatest avidity. "Yes," said he, "I breathe again ! again do I exist ! I hear sounds ! I behold a firmament, spangled over with stars !"—Nouronihar, catching these beloved accents, extricated herself from the leaves and ran to clasp Gulchenrouz to her bosom. The first objects she remarked were their long simars, their garlands of flowers, and their naked feet : she hid her face in her hands to reflect. The vision of the enchanted bath, the despair of her father, and, more vividly than both, the majestic figure of Vathek, recurred to her memory. She recollected, also, that herself and Gulchenrouz had been sick and dying ; but all these images bewildered her mind. Not knowing where she was, she turned her eyes on all sides, as if to recognise the surrounding scene. This singular lake, those flames reflected from its glassy surface, the pale hues of its banks, the romantic cabins, the bulrushes, that sadly waved their drooping heads, the storks, whose melancholy cries blended

with the shrill voices of the dwarfs,—every thing conspired to persuade her that the angel of death had opened the portal of some other world.

Gulchenrouz, on his part, lost in wonder, clung to the neck of his cousin. He believed himself in the region of phantoms; and was terrified at the silence she preserved. At length addressing her; "Speak," said he; "where are we? Do you not see those spectres that are stirring the burning coals? Are they Monker and Nekir who are come to throw us into them? Does the fatal bridge cross this lake, whose solemn stillness, perhaps, conceals from us an abyss, in which, for whole ages, we shall be doomed incessantly to sink?"

"No, my children," said Sutlememe, going towards them; "take comfort! the exterminating angel, who conducted our souls hither after yours, hath assured us, that the chastisement of your indolent and voluptuous life shall be restricted to a certain series of years, which you must pass in this dreary abode; where the sun is scarcely visible, and where the soil yields neither fruits nor flowers. These," continued she, pointing to the dwarfs, "will provide for our wants; for souls so mundane as ours retain too strong a tincture of their earthly extraction. Instead of meats, your food will be nothing but rice; and your bread shall be moistened in the fogs that brood over the surface of the lake."

At this desolating prospect, the poor children burst into tears, and prostrated themselves before the dwarfs; who perfectly supported their characters, and delivered an excellent discourse, of a customary length, upon the sacred camel; which, after a thousand years, was to convey them to the paradise of the faithful.

The sermon being ended, and ablutions performed, they praised Alla and the Prophet; supped very indifferently; and retired to their withered leaves. Nouronihar and her little cousin consoled themselves on finding that the dead might lie in one cabin. Having slept well before, the remainder of the night was spent in conversation on what had befallen them; and both, from a dread of ap-

paritions, betook themselves for protection to one another's arms.

In the morning, which was lowering and rainy, the dwarfs mounted high poles, like minarets, and called them to prayers. The whole congregation, which consisted of Sutlememe, Shaban, the four eunuchs, and a few storks that were tired of fishing, was already assembled. The two children came forth from their cabin with a slow and dejected pace. As their minds were in a tender and melancholy mood, their devotions were performed with fervour. No sooner were they finished than Gulchenrouz demanded of Sutlememe, and the rest, "how they happened to die so opportunely for his cousin and himself?"—"We killed ourselves," returned Sutlememe, "in despair at your death." On this, Nouronihar, who, notwithstanding what had passed, had not yet forgotten her vision, said,—"And the caliph! is he also dead of his grief? and will he likewise come hither?" The dwarfs, who were prepared with an answer, most demurely replied, "Vathek is damned beyond all redemption!"—"I readily believe so," said Gulchenrouz; "and am glad, from my heart, to hear it; for I am convinced it was his horrible look that sent us hither, to listen to sermons, and mess upon rice." One week passed away, on the side of the lake, unmarked by any variety: Nouronihar ruminating on the grandeur of which death had deprived her; and Gulchenrouz applying to prayers and basket-making with the dwarfs, who infinitely pleased him.

Whilst this scene of innocence was exhibiting in the mountains, the caliph presented himself to the emir in a new light. The instant he recovered the use of his senses, with a voice that made Bababalouk quake, he thundered out,—"Perfidious Giaour! I renounce thee for ever! it is thou who hast slain my beloved Nouronihar! and I supplicate the pardon of Mahomet; who would have preserved her to me had I been more wise. Let water be brought to perform my ablutions, and let the pious Fakreddin be called to offer up his prayers with mine, and reconcile me to him. Afterwards, we will go together and visit the sepulchre of the unfortunate Nouronihar. I am resolved

to become a hermit, and consume the residue of my days on this mountain, in hope of expiating my crimes."—"And what do you intend to live upon there?" enquired Bababalouk.—"I hardly know," replied Vathek; "but I will tell you when I feel hungry — which, I believe, will not soon be the case."

The arrival of Fakreddin put a stop to this conversation. As soon as Vathek saw him, he threw his arms around his neck, bedewed his face with a torrent of tears, and uttered things so affecting, so pious, that the emir, crying for joy, congratulated himself, in his heart, upon having performed so admirable and unexpected a conversion. As for the pilgrimage to the mountain, Fakreddin had his reasons not to oppose it; therefore, each ascending his own litter, they started.

Notwithstanding the vigilance with which his attendants watched the caliph, they could not prevent his harrowing his cheeks with a few scratches, when on the place where he was told Nouronihar had been buried; they were even obliged to drag him away, by force of hands, from the melancholy spot. However, he swore, with a solemn oath, that he would return thither every day. This resolution did not exactly please the emir — yet he flattered himself that the caliph might not proceed farther, and would merely perform his devotions in the cavern of Meimouné. Besides, the lake was so completely concealed within the solitary bosom of those tremendous rocks, that he thought it utterly impossible any one could ever find it. This security of Fakreddin was also considerably strengthened by the conduct of Vathek, who performed his vow most scrupulously, and returned daily from the hill so devout, and so contrite, that all the grey-beards were in a state of ecstasy on account of it.

Nouronihar was not altogether so content; for though she felt a fondness for Gulchenrouz, who, to augment the attachment, had been left at full liberty with her, yet she still regarded him as but a bauble that bore no competition with the carbuncle of Giamschid. At times, she indulged doubts on the mode of her being; and scarcely could believe that the dead had all the wants and the whims of the

living. To gain satisfaction, however, on so perplexing a topic, one morning, whilst all were asleep, she arose with a breathless caution from the side of Gulchenrouz; and, after having given him a soft kiss, began to follow the windings of the lake, till it terminated with a rock, the top of which was accessible, though lofty. This she climbed with considerable toil; and having reached the summit, set forward in a run, like a doe before the hunter. Though she skipped with the alertness of an antelope, yet, at intervals, she was forced to desist, and rest beneath the tamarisks to recover her breath. Whilst she, thus reclined, was occupied with her little reflections on the apprehension that she had some knowledge of the place, Vathek, who, finding himself that morning but ill at ease, had gone forth before the dawn, presented himself, on a sudden, to her view. Motionless with surprise, he durst not approach the figure before him trembling and pale, but yet lovely to behold. At length, Nouronihar, with a mixture of pleasure and affliction, raising her fine eyes to him, said, "My lord! are you then come hither to eat rice and hear sermons with me?" — "Beloved phantom!" cried Vathek, "thou dost speak; thou hast the same graceful form; the same radiant features; art thou palpable likewise?" and, eagerly embracing her, added, "Here are limbs and a bosom animated with a gentle warmth! — What can such a prodigy mean?"

Nouronihar, with indifference, answered, — "You know, my lord, that I died on the very night you honoured me with your visit. My cousin maintains it was from one of your glances; but I cannot believe him; for to me they seem not so dreadful. Gulchenrouz died with me, and we were both brought into a region of desolation, where we are fed with a wretched diet. If you be dead also, and are come hither to join us, I pity your lot; for you will be stunned with the clang of the dwarfs and the storks. Besides, it is mortifying in the extreme, that you, as well as myself, should have lost the treasures of the subterranean palace."

At the mention of the subterranean palace, the caliph suspended, his caresses, (which, indeed, had proceeded pretty far,) to seek from Nouronihar an explanation of her

meaning. She then recapitulated her vision; what immediately followed; and the history of her pretended death; adding, also, a description of the place of expiation, from whence she had fled; and all in a manner that would have extorted his laughter, had not the thoughts of Vathek been too deeply engaged. No sooner, however, had she ended, than he again clasped her to his bosom and said, "Light of my eyes, the mystery is unravelled; we both are alive! Your father is a cheat, who, for the sake of dividing us, hath deluded us both; and the Giaour, whose design, as far as I can discover, is, that we shall proceed together, seems scarce a whit better. It shall be some time at least before he finds us in his palace of fire. Your lovely little person, in my estimation, is far more precious than all the treasures of the pre-adamite sultans; and I wish to possess it at pleasure, and in open day, for many a moon, before I go to burrow under ground, like a mole. Forget this little trifler, Gulchenrouz; and ——"—"Ah, my lord!" interposed Nouronihar, "let me entreat that you do him no evil."—"No, no!" replied Vathek; "I have already bid you forbear to alarm yourself for him. He has been brought up too much on milk and sugar to stimulate my jealousy. We will leave him with the dwarfs: who, by the by, are my old acquaintances: their company will suit him far better than yours. As to other matters, I will return no more to your father's. I want not to have my ears dinned by him and his dotards with the violation of the rights of hospitality, as if it were less an honour for you to espouse the sovereign of the world than a girl dressed up like a boy."

Nouronihar could find nothing to oppose in a discourse so eloquent. She only wished the amorous monarch had discovered more ardour for the carbuncle of Giamschid: but flattered herself it would gradually increase; and, therefore, yielded to his will, with the most bewitching submission.

When the caliph judged it proper, he called for Bababalouk, who was asleep in the cave of Meimouné, and dreaming that the phantom of Nouronihar, having mounted him once more on her swing, had just given him such a

jerk, that he, one moment, soared above the mountains, and the next, sunk into the abyss. Starting from his sleep at the sound of his master, he ran, gasping for breath, and had nearly fallen backward at the sight, as he believed, of the spectre by whom he had so lately been haunted in his dream. "Ah, my lord!" cried he, recoiling ten steps, and covering his eyes with both hands, "do you then perform the office of a goul? have you dug up the dead? Yet hope not to make her your prey; for, after all she hath caused me to suffer, she is wicked enough to prey even upon you."

"Cease to play the fool," said Vathek, "and thou shalt soon be convinced that it is Nouronihar herself, alive and well, whom I clasp to my breast. Go and pitch my tents in the neighbouring valley. There will I fix my abode, with this beautiful tulip, whose colours I soon shall restore. There exert thy best endeavours to procure whatever can augment the enjoyments of life, till I shall disclose to thee more of my will."

The news of so unlucky an event soon reached the ears of the emir, who abandoned himself to grief and despair, and began, as did his old greybeards, to begrime his visage with ashes. A total supineness ensued; travellers were no longer entertained; no more plasters were spread; and, instead of the charitable activity that had distinguished this asylum, the whole of its inhabitants exhibited only faces of half a cubit long, and uttered groans that accorded with their forlorn situation.

Though Fakreddin bewailed his daughter, as lost to him for ever, yet Gulchenrouz was not forgotten. He despatched immediate instructions to Sutlememe, Shaban, and the dwarfs, enjoining them not to undeceive the child in respect to his state; but, under some pretence, to convey him far from the lofty rock at the extremity of the lake, to a place which he should appoint, as safer from danger, for he suspected that Vathek intended him evil.

Gulchenrouz, in the mean while, was filled with amazement at not finding his cousin; nor were the dwarfs less surprised: but Sutlememe, who had more penetration, immediately guessed what had happened. Gulchenrouz was

amused with the delusive hope of once more embracing Nouronihar, in the interior recesses of the mountains, where the ground, strewed over with orange blossoms and jasmines, offered beds much more inviting than the withered leaves in their cabin; where they might accompany with their voices the sounds of their lutes, and chase butterflies. Sutlememe was far gone in this sort of description, when one of the four eunuchs beckoned her aside, to apprise her of the arrival of a messenger from their fraternity, who had explained the secret of the flight of Nouronihar, and brought the commands of the emir. A council with Shaban and the dwarfs was immediately held. Their baggage being stowed in consequence of it, they embarked in a shallop, and quietly sailed with the little one, who acquiesced in all their proposals. Their voyage proceeded in the same manner, till they came to the place where the lake sinks beneath the hollow of a rock: but as soon as the bark had entered it, and Gulchenrouz found himself surrounded with darkness, he was seized with a dreadful consternation, and incessantly uttered the most piercing outcries; for he now was persuaded he should actually be damned for having taken too many little freedoms in his lifetime with his cousin.

But let us return to the caliph, and her who ruled over his heart. Bababalouk had pitched the tents, and closed up the extremities of the valley, with magnificent screens of India cloth, which were guarded by Ethiopian slaves with their drawn sabres. To preserve the verdure of this beautiful enclosure in its natural freshness, white eunuchs went continually round it with gilt water vessels. The waving of fans was heard near the imperial pavilion; where, by the voluptuous light that glowed through the muslins, the caliph enjoyed, at full view, all the attractions of Nouronihar. Inebriated with delight, he was all ear to her charming voice, which accompanied the lute; while she was not less captivated with his descriptions of Samarah, and the tower full of wonders; but especially with his relation of the adventure of the ball, and the chasm of the Giaour, with its ebony portal.

In this manner they conversed the whole day, and at

night they bathed together in a basin of black marble, which admirably set off the fairness of Nouronihar. Bababalouk, whose good graces this beauty had regained, spared no attention, that their repasts might be served up with the minutest exactness: some exquisite rarity was ever placed before them; and he sent even to Schiraz, for that fragrant and delicious wine which had been hoarded up in bottles, prior to the birth of Mahomet. He had excavated little ovens in the rock, to bake the nice manchets which were prepared by the hands of Nouronihar, from whence they had derived a flavour so grateful to Vathek, that he regarded the ragouts of his other wives as entirely mawkish: whilst they would have died of chagrin at the emir's, at finding themselves so neglected, if Fakreddin, notwithstanding his resentment, had not taken pity upon them.

The Sultana Dilara, who, till then, had been the favourite, took this dereliction of the caliph to heart, with a vehemence natural to her character; for, during her continuance in favour, she had imbibed from Vathek many of his extravagant fancies, and was fired with impatience to behold the superb tombs of Istakar, and the palace of forty columns; besides, having been brought up amongst the magi, she had fondly cherished the idea of the caliph's devoting himself to the worship of fire: thus his voluptuous and desultory life with her rival was to her a double source of affliction. The transient piety of Vathek had occasioned her some serious alarms; but the present was an evil of far greater magnitude. She resolved, therefore, without hesitation, to write to Carathis, and acquaint her that all things went ill; that they had eaten, slept, and revelled at an old emir's, whose sanctity was very formidable; and that, after all, the prospect of possessing the treasures of the pre-adamite sultans was no less remote than before. This letter was intrusted to the care of two woodmen, who were at work in one of the great forests of the mountains; and who, being acquainted with the shortest cuts, arrived in ten days at Samarah.

The Princess Carathis was engaged at chess with Morakanabad, when the arrival of these woodfellers was announced. She, after some weeks of Vathek's absence, had

forsaken the upper regions of her tower, because every thing appeared in confusion among the stars, which she consulted relative to the fate of her son. In vain did she renew her fumigations, and extend herself on the roof, to obtain mystic visions; nothing more could she see in her dreams, than pieces of brocade, nosegays of flowers, and other unmeaning gewgaws. These disappointments had thrown her into a state of dejection, which no drug in her power was sufficient to remove. Her only resource was in Morakanabad, who was a good man, and endowed with a decent share of confidence; yet whilst in her company he never thought himself on roses.

No person knew aught of Vathek, and, of course, a thousand ridiculous stories were propagated at his expense. The eagerness of Carathis may be easily guessed at receiving the letter, as well as her rage at reading the dissolute conduct of her son. "Is it so?" said she: "either I will perish, or Vathek shall enter the palace of fire. Let me expire in flames, provided he may reign on the throne of Soliman!" Having said this, and whirled herself round in a magical manner, which struck Morakanabad with such terror as caused him to recoil, she ordered her great camel Alboufaki to be brought, and the hideous Nerkes, with the unrelenting Cafour, to attend. "I require no other retinue," said she to Morakanabad; "I am going on affairs of emergency; a truce, therefore, to parade! Take you care of the people: fleece them well in my absence; for we shall expend large sums, and one knows not what may betide."

The night was uncommonly dark, and a pestilential blast blew from the plain of Catoul, that would have deterred any other traveller, however urgent the call: but Carathis enjoyed most whatever filled others with dread. Nerkes concurred in opinion with her; and Cafour had a particular predilection for a pestilence. In the morning this accomplished caravan, with the woodfellers, who directed their route, halted on the edge of an extensive marsh, from whence so noxious a vapour arose as would have destroyed any animal but Alboufaki, who naturally inhaled these malignant fogs with delight. The peasants entreated their

convoy not to sleep in this place. "To sleep," cried Carathis, "what an excellent thought! I never sleep, but for visions; and, as to my attendants, their occupations are too many to close the only eye they have." The poor peasants, who were not overpleased with their party, remained open-mouthed with surprise.

Carathis alighted, as well as her negresses; and, severally stripping off their outer garments, they all ran to cull from those spots where the sun shone fiercest, the venomous plants that grew on the marsh. This provision was made for the family of the emir; and whoever might retard the expedition to Istakar. The woodmen were overcome with fear, when they beheld these three horrible phantoms run; and, not much relishing the company of Alboufaki, stood aghast at the command of Carathis to set forward; notwithstanding it was noon, and the heat fierce enough to calcine even rocks. In spite, however, of every remonstrance, they were forced implicitly to submit.

Alboufaki, who delighted in solitude, constantly snorted whenever he perceived himself near a habitation; and Carathis, who was apt to spoil him with indulgence, as constantly turned him aside: so that the peasants were precluded from procuring subsistence; for the milch goats and ewes, which Providence had sent towards the district they traversed to refresh travellers with their milk, all fled at the sight of the hideous animal and his strange riders. As to Carathis, she needed no common aliment: for her invention had previously furnished her with an opiate to stay her stomach; some of which she imparted to her mutes.

At dusk, Alboufaki making a sudden stop, stamped with his foot; which, to Carathis, who knew his ways, was a certain indication that she was near the confines of some cemetery. The moon shed a bright light on the spot, which served to discover a long wall with a large door in it, standing ajar; and so high that Alboufaki might easily enter. The miserable guides, who perceived their end approaching, humbly implored Carathis, as she had now so good an opportunity, to inter them, and immediately gave up the ghost. Nerkes and Cafour, whose wit was of

a style peculiar to themselves, were by no means parsimonious of it on the folly of these poor people; nor could any thing have been found more suited to their taste, than the site of the burying-ground, and the sepulchres which its precincts contained. There were at least 2000 of them on the declivity of a hill. Carathis was too eager to execute her plan, to stop at the view, charming as it appeared in her eyes. Pondering the advantages that might accrue from her present situation, she said to herself, "So beautiful a cemetery must be haunted by gouls! they never want for intelligence: having heedlessly suffered my stupid guides to expire, I will apply for directions to them; and, as an inducement, will invite them to regale on these fresh corpses." After this wise soliloquy, she beckoned to Nerkes and Cafour, and made signs with her fingers, as much as to say, "Go; knock against the sides of the tombs, and strike up your delightful warblings."

The negresses, full of joy at the behests of their mistress, and promising themselves much pleasure from the society of the gouls, went with an air of conquest, and began their knockings at the tombs. As their strokes were repeated, a hollow noise was made in the earth: the surface hove up into heaps; and the gouls, on all sides, protruded their noses to inhale the effluvia which the carcasses of the woodmen began to emit. They assembled before a sarcophagus of white marble, where Carathis was seated between the bodies of her miserable guides. The princess received her visitants with distinguished politeness; and, supper being ended, they talked of business. Carathis soon learned from them every thing she wanted to discover; and, without loss of time, prepared to set forward on her journey. Her negresses, who were forming tender connections with the gouls, importuned her, with all their fingers, to wait at least till the dawn. But Carathis, being chastity in the abstract, and an implacable enemy to love intrigues and sloth, at once rejected their prayer; mounted Alboufaki, and commanded them to take their seats instantly. Four days and four nights she continued her route without interruption. On the fifth, she traversed craggy mountains, and half-burnt forests; and arrived on

the sixth, before the beautiful screens which concealed from all eyes the voluptuous wanderings of her son.

It was daybreak, and the guards were snoring on their posts in careless security, when the rough trot of Alboufaki awoke them in consternation. Imagining that a group of spectres, ascended from the abyss, was approaching, they all, without ceremony, took to their heels. Vathek was, at that instant, with Nouronihar in the bath, hearing tales, and laughing at Bababalouk, who related them; but, no sooner did the outcry of his guards reach him, than he flounced from the water like a carp, and as soon threw himself back at the sight of Carathis; who, advancing with her negresses upon Alboufaki, broke through the muslin awnings and veils of the pavilion. At this sudden apparition, Nouronihar (for she was not, at all times, free from remorse) fancied that the moment of celestial vengeance was come, and clung about the caliph in amorous despondence.

Carathis, still seated on her camel, foamed with indignation at the spectacle which obtruded itself on her chaste view. She thundered forth without check or mercy, "Thou double-headed and four-legged monster! what means all this winding and writhing? Art thou not ashamed to be seen grasping this limber sapling, in preference to the sceptre of the pre-adamite sultans? Is it then for this paltry doxy that thou hast violated the conditions in the parchment of our Giaour? Is it on her thou hast lavished thy precious moments? Is this the fruit of the knowledge I have taught thee? Is this the end of thy journey? Tear thyself from the arms of this little simpleton; drown her in the water before me, and instantly follow my guidance."

In the first ebullition of his fury, Vathek had resolved to rip open the body of Alboufaki, and to stuff it with those of the negresses and of Carathis herself; but the remembrance of the Giaour, the palace of Istakar, the sabres, and the talismans, flashing before his imagination with the simultaneousness of lightning, he became more moderate, and said to his mother in a civil, but decisive tone, "Dread lady, you shall be obeyed; but I will not drown Nou-

ronihar. She is sweeter to me than a Myrabolan comfit; and is enamoured of carbuncles, especially that of Giamschid, which hath also been promised to be conferred upon her: she, therefore, shall go along with us; for I intend to repose with her upon the sofas of Soliman: I can sleep no more without her." — "Be it so," replied Carathis, alighting; and, at the same time, committing Alboufaki to the charge of her black women.

Nouronihar, who had not yet quitted her hold, began to take courage; and said, with an accent of fondness to the caliph, "Dear sovereign of my soul! I will follow thee, if it be thy will, beyond the Kaf, in the land of the afrits. I will not hesitate to climb, for thee, the nest of the Simurgh; who, this lady excepted, is the most awful of created beings." — "We have here, then," subjoined Carathis, "a girl both of courage and science!" Nouronihar had certainly both; but, notwithstanding all her firmness, she could not help casting back a thought of regret upon the graces of her little Gulchenrouz, and the days of tender endearments she had participated with him. She even dropped a few tears, which the caliph observed; and inadvertently breathed out with a sigh, "Alas! my gentle cousin, what will become of thee?" Vathek, at this apostrophe, knitted up his brows, and Carathis enquired what it could mean. "She is preposterously sighing after a stripling with languishing eyes and soft hair, who loves her," said the caliph.—"Where is he?" asked Carathis. "I must be acquainted with this pretty child; for," added she, lowering her voice, "I design, before I depart, to regain the favour of the Giaour. There is nothing so delicious, in his estimation, as the heart of a delicate boy palpitating with the first tumults of love."

Vathek, as he came from the bath, commanded Bababalouk to collect the women, and other movables of his harem, embody his troops, and hold himself in readiness to march within three days; whilst Carathis retired alone to a tent, where the Giaour solaced her with encouraging visions: but at length waking, she found at her feet Nerkes and Cafour, who informed her, by their signs, that having led Alboufaki to the borders of a lake, to browse on some

grey moss that looked tolerably venomous, they had discovered certain blue fishes, of the same kind with those in the reservoir on the top of the tower. "Ah! ha!" said she, "I will go thither to them. These fish are, past doubt, of a species that, by a small operation, I can render oracular. They may tell me where this little Gulchenrouz is, whom I am bent upon sacrificing." Having thus spoken, she immediately set out with her swarthy retinue.

It being but seldom that time is lost, in the accomplishment of a wicked enterprise, Carathis and her negresses soon arrived at the lake; where, after burning the magical drugs with which they were always provided, they stripped themselves naked, and waded to their chins; Nerkes and Cafour waving torches around them, and Carathis pronouncing her barbarous incantations. The fishes, with one accord, thrust forth their heads from the water; which was violently rippled by the flutter of their fins: and, at length, finding themselves constrained, by the potency of the charm, they opened their piteous mouths, and said, "From gills to tail, we are yours; what seek ye to know?" —"Fishes," answered she, "I conjure you, by your glittering scales, tell me where now is Gulchenrouz?" — "Beyond the rock," replied the shoal, in full chorus: "will this content you? for we do not delight in expanding our mouths."—"It will," returned the princess: "I am not to learn, that you are not used to long conversations: I will leave you therefore to repose, though I had other questions to propound." The instant she had spoken, the water became smooth, and the fishes at once disappeared.

Carathis, inflated with the venom of her projects, strode hastily over the rock; and found the amiable Gulchenrouz asleep in an arbour; whilst the two dwarfs were watching at his side, and ruminating their accustomed prayers. These diminutive personages possessed the gift of divining, whenever an enemy to good Mussulmans approached: thus they anticipated the arrival of Carathis, who, stopping short, said to herself, "How placidly doth he recline his lovely little head! how pale and languishing are his looks! it is just the very child of my wishes!"

The dwarfs interrupted this delectable soliloquy, by leaping instantly upon her; and scratching her face with their utmost zeal. But Nerkes and Cafour, betaking themselves to the succour of their mistress, pinched the dwarfs so severely in return, that they both gave up the ghost, imploring Mahomet to inflict his sorest vengeance upon this wicked woman, and all her household.

At the noise which this strange conflict occasioned in the valley, Gulchenrouz awoke, and, bewildered with terror, sprung impetuously and climbed an old fig-tree that rose against the acclivity of the rocks; from thence he gained their summits, and ran for two hours without once looking back. At last, exhausted with fatigue, he fell senseless into the arms of a good old genius, whose fondness for the company of children had made it his sole occupation to protect them. Whilst performing his wonted rounds through the air, he had pounced on the cruel Giaour, at the instant of his growling in the horrible chasm, and had rescued the fifty little victims which the impiety of Vathek had devoted to his voracity. These the genius brought up in nests still higher than the clouds, and himself fixed his abode in a nest more capacious than the rest, from which he had expelled the Rocs that had built it.

These inviolable asylums were defended against the dives and the afrits, by waving streamers; on which were inscribed in characters of gold, that flashed like lightning, the names of Alla and the Prophet. It was there that Gulchenrouz, who as yet remained undeceived with respect to his pretended death, thought himself in the mansions of eternal peace. He admitted without fear the congratulations of his little friends, who were all assembled in the nest of the venerable genius, and vied with each other in kissing his serene forehead and beautiful eyelids. Remote from the inquietudes of the world, the impertinence of harems, the brutality of eunuchs, and the inconstancy of women, there he found a place truly congenial to the delights of his soul. In this peaceable society his days, months, and years glided on; nor was he less happy than the rest of his companions: for the genius, instead of burdening his pupils with perishable riches and vain

sciences, conferred upon them the boon of perpetual childhood.

Carathis, unaccustomed to the loss of her prey, vented a thousand execrations on her negresses, for not seizing the child, instead of amusing themselves with pinching to death two insignificant dwarfs from which they gain no advantage. She returned into the valley murmuring; and, finding that her son was not risen from the arms of Nouronihar, discharged her ill-humour upon both. The idea, however, of departing next day for Istakar, and of cultivating, through the good offices of the Giaour, an intimacy with Eblis himself, at length consoled her chagrin. But fate had ordained it otherwise.

In the evening, as Carathis was conversing with Dilara, who through her contrivance had become of the party, and whose taste resembled her own, Bababalouk came to acquaint her that the sky towards Samarah looked of a fiery red, and seemed to portend some alarming disaster. Immediately recurring to her astrolabes and instruments of magic, she took the altitude of the planets, and discovered, by her calculations, to her great mortification, that a formidable revolt had taken place at Samarah, that Motavakel, availing himself of the disgust, which was inveterate against his brother, had incited commotions amongst the populace, made himself master of the palace, and actually invested the great tower, to which Morakanabad had retired, with a handful of the few that still remained faithful to Vathek.

"What!" exclaimed she; "must I lose, then, my tower! my mutes! my negresses! my mummies! and, worse than all, the laboratory, the favourite resort of my nightly lucubrations, without knowing, at least, if my hair-brained son will complete his adventure? No! I will not be dupe! immediately will I speed to support Morakanabad. By my formidable art, the clouds shall pour grape-shot in the faces of the assailants, and shafts of red-hot iron on their heads. I will let loose my stores of hungry serpents and torpedos from beneath them; and we shall soon see the stand they will make against such an explosion!"

Having thus spoken, Carathis hasted to her son, who was

tranquilly banqueting with Nouronihar, in his superb carnation-coloured tent. 'Glutton that thou art!" cried she; "were it not for me, thou wouldst soon find thyself the mere commander of savoury pies. Thy faithful subjects have abjured the faith they swore to thee. Motavakel, thy brother, now reigns, on the hill of Pied Horses; and, had I not some slight resources in the tower, would not be easily persuaded to abdicate. But, that time may not be lost, I shall only add a few words: — Strike tent to-night; set forward; and beware how thou loiterest again by the way. Though thou hast forfeited the conditions of the parchment, I am not yet without hope; for it cannot be denied that thou hast violated, to admiration, the laws of hospitality by seducing the daughter of the emir, after having partaken of his bread and his salt. Such a conduct cannot but be delightful to the Giaour; and if, on thy march, thou canst signalise thyself by an additional crime, all will still go well, and thou shalt enter the palace of Soliman in triumph. Adieu! Alboufaki and my negresses are waiting at the door."

The caliph had nothing to offer in reply: he wished his mother a prosperous journey, and ate on till he had finished his supper. At midnight, the camp broke up, amidst the flourishing of trumpets and other martial instruments; but loud indeed must have been the sound of the tymbals, to overpower the blubbering of the emir and his greybeards; who, by an excessive profusion of tears, had so far exhausted the radical moisture, that their eyes shrivelled up in their sockets, and their hairs dropped off by the roots. Nouronihar, to whom such a symphony was painful, did not grieve to get out of hearing. She accompanied the caliph in the imperial litter; where they amused themselves with imagining the splendour which was soon to surround them. The other women, overcome with dejection, were dolefully rocked in their cages; whilst Dilara consoled herself with anticipating the joy of celebrating the rites of fire on the stately terraces of Istakar.

In four days they reached the spacious valley of Rocnabad. The season of spring was in all its vigour; and the grotesque branches of the almond trees in full blossom,

fantastically checkered with hyacinths and jonquils, breathed forth a delightful fragrance. Myriads of bees, and scarce fewer of santons, had there taken up their abode. On the banks of the stream, hives and oratories were alternately ranged; and their neatness and whiteness were set off by the deep green of the cypresses that spired up amongst them. These pious personages amused themselves with cultivating little gardens, that abounded with flowers and fruits; especially musk-melons of the best flavour that Persia could boast. Sometimes dispersed over the meadow, they entertained themselves with feeding peacocks whiter than snow, and turtles more blue than the sapphire. In this manner were they occupied when the harbingers of the imperial procession began to proclaim, "Inhabitants of Rocnabad! prostrate yourselves on the brink of your pure waters; and tender your thanksgivings to Heaven, that vouchsafeth to show you a ray of its glory: for, lo! the commander of the faithful draws near."

The poor santons, filled with holy energy, having bustled to light up wax torches in their oratories, and expand the Koran on their ebony desks, went forth to meet the caliph with baskets of honeycomb, dates, and melons. But, whilst they were advancing in solemn procession and with measured steps, the horses, camels, and guards, wantoned over their tulips and other flowers, and made a terrible havoc amongst them. The santons could not help casting from one eye a look of pity on the ravages committing around them; whilst the other was fixed upon the caliph and heaven. Nouronihar, enraptured with the scenery of a place which brought back to her remembrance the pleasing solitudes where her infancy had passed, entreated Vathek to stop: but he, suspecting that these oratories might be deemed, by the Giaour, an habitation, commanded his pioneers to level them all. The santons stood motionless with horror at the barbarous mandate, and at last broke out into lamentations; but these were uttered with so ill a grace, that Vathek bade his eunuchs to kick them from his presence. He then descended from the litter with Nouronihar. They sauntered together in the meadow; and amused themselves with culling flowers, and

passing a thousand pleasantries on each other. But the bees, who were staunch Mussulmans, thinking it their duty to revenge the insult offered to their dear masters, the santons, assembled so zealously to do it with good effect, that the caliph and Nouronihar were glad to find their tents prepared to receive them.

Bababalouk, who, in capacity of purveyor, had acquitted himself with applause as to peacocks and turtles, lost no time in consigning some dozens to the spit, and as many more to be fricasseed. Whilst they were feasting, laughing, carousing, and blaspheming at pleasure, on the banquet so liberally furnished, the moullahs, the sheiks, the cadis, and imans of Schiraz (who seemed not to have met the santons) arrived; leading by bridles of riband, inscribed from the Koran, a train of asses which were loaded with the choicest fruits the country could boast. Having presented their offerings to the caliph, they petitioned him to honour their city and mosques with his presence. "Fancy not," said Vathek, "that you can detain me. Your presence I condescend to accept, but beg you will let me be quiet, for I am not over-fond of resisting temptation. Retire, then; yet, as it is not decent for personages so reverend to return on foot, and as you have not the appearance of expert riders, my eunuchs shall tie you on your asses, with the precaution that your backs be not turned towards me; for they understand etiquette."—In this deputation were some high-stomached sheiks, who, taking Vathek for a fool, scrupled not to speak their opinion. These Bababalouk girded with double cords; and having well disciplined their asses with nettles behind, they all started, with a preternatural alertness, plunging, kicking, and running foul of one another, in the most ludicrous manner imaginable.

Nouronihar and the caliph mutually contended who should most enjoy so degrading a sight. They burst out in peals of laughter, to see the old men and their asses fall into the stream. The leg of one was fractured; the shoulder of another dislocated; the teeth of a third dashed out; and the rest suffered still worse.

Two days more, undisturbed by fresh embassies, having

been devoted to the pleasures of Rocnabad, the expedition proceeded; leaving Schiraz on the right, and verging towards a large plain; from whence were discernible, on the edge of the horizon, the dark summits of the mountains of Istakar.

At this prospect the caliph and Nouronihar were unable to repress their transports. They bounded from their litter to the ground, and broke forth into such wild exclammations, as amazed all within hearing. Interrogating each other, they shouted, "Are we not approaching the radiant palace of light? or gardens, more delightful than those of Sheddad?"—Infatuated mortals! they thus indulged delusive conjecture, unable to fathom the decrees of the Most High!

The good genii, who had not totally relinquished the superintendence of Vathek, repairing to Mahomet, in the seventh heaven, said, "Merciful Prophet! stretch forth thy propitious arms towards thy vicegerent; who is ready to fall, irretrievably, into the snare which his enemies, the dives, have prepared to destroy him. The Giaour is awaiting his arrival, in the abominable palace of fire; where, if he once set his foot, his perdition will be inevitable." Mahomet answered, with an air of indignation, "He hath too well deserved to be resigned to himself; but I permit you to try if one effort more will be effectual to divert him from pursuing his ruin."

One of these beneficent genii, assuming, without delay, the exterior of a shepherd, more renowned for his piety than all the derviches and santons of the region, took his station near a flock of white sheep, on the slope of a hill; and began to pour forth, from his flute, such airs of pathetic melody, as subdued the very soul, and, wakening remorse, drove, far from it, every frivolous fancy. At these energetic sounds, the sun hid himself beneath a gloomy cloud; and the waters of two little lakes, that were naturally clearer then crystal, became of a colour like blood. The whole of this superb assembly was involuntarily drawn towards the declivity of the hill. With downcast eyes, they all stood abashed; each upbraiding himself with the evil he had done. The heart of Dilara

palpitated; and the chief of the eunuchs, with a sigh of contrition, implored pardon of the women, whom, for his own satisfaction, he had so often tormented.

Vathek and Nouronihar turned pale in their litter; and, regarding each other with haggard looks, reproached themselves — the one with a thousand of the blackest crimes, a thousand projects of impious ambition, — the other, with the desolation of her family, and the perdition of the amiable Gulchenrouz. Nouronihar persuaded herself that she heard, in the fatal music, the groans of her dying father; and Vathek, the sobs of the fifty children he had sacrificed to the Giaour. Amidst these complicated pangs of anguish, they perceived themselves impelled towards the shepherd, whose countenance was so commanding that Vathek, for the first time, felt overawed; whilst Nouronihar concealed her face with her hands. The music paused; and the genius, addressing the caliph, said, "Deluded prince! to whom Providence hath confided the care of innumerable subjects, is it thus that thou fulfillest thy mission? Thy crimes are already completed; and art thou now hastening towards thy punishment? Thou knowest that, beyond these mountains, Eblis and his accursed dives hold their infernal empire; and, seduced by a malignant phantom, thou art proceeding to surrender thyself to them! This moment is the last of grace allowed thee: abandon thy atrocious purpose: return: give back Nouronihar to her father, who still retains a few sparks of life: destroy thy tower with all its abominations: drive Carathis from thy councils: be just to thy subjects: respect the ministers of the Prophet: compensate for thy impieties by an exemplary life; and, instead of squandering thy days in voluptuous indulgence, lament thy crimes on the sepulchres of thy ancestors. Thou beholdest the clouds that obscure the sun: at the instant he recovers his splendour, if thy heart be not changed, the time of mercy assigned thee will be past for ever."

Vathek, depressed with fear, was on the point of prostrating himself at the feet of the shepherd, whom he perceived to be of a nature superior to man: but, his pride prevailing, he audaciously lifted his head, and, glancing at

him one of his terrible looks, said, "Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions: thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood to acquire a power which will make thy equals tremble: deem not that I shall retire when in view of the port; or that I will relinquish her who is dearer to me than either my life or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! let him illume my career! it matters not where it may end." On uttering these words, which made even the genius shudder, Vathek threw himself into the arms of Nouronihar, and commanded that his horses should be forced back to the road.

There was no difficulty in obeying these orders, for the attraction had ceased: the sun shone forth in all his glory, and the shepherd vanished with a lamentable scream.

The fatal impression of the music of the genius remained, notwithstanding, in the heart of Vathek's attendants. They viewed each other with looks of consternation. At the approach of night almost all of them escaped; and of this numerous assemblage there only remained the chief of the eunuchs, some idolatrous slaves, Dilara, and a few other women, who, like herself, were votaries of the religion of the Magi.

The caliph, fired with the ambition of prescribing laws to the powers of darkness, was but little embarrassed at this dereliction. The impetuosity of his blood prevented him from sleeping; nor did he encamp any more, as before. Nouronihar, whose impatience, if possible, exceeded his own, importuned him to hasten his march, and lavished on him a thousand caresses, to beguile all reflection. She fancied herself already more potent than Balkis, and pictured to her imagination the genii falling prostrate at the foot of her throne. In this manner they advanced by moonlight till they came within view of the two towering rocks that form a kind of portal to the valley, at the extremity of which rose the vast ruins of Istakar. Aloft on the mountain glimmered the fronts of various royal mausoleums, the horror of which was deepened by the shadows of night. They passed through two villages almost de-

serted, the only inhabitants remaining being a few feeble old men, who, at the sight of horses and litters, fell upon their knees, and cried out, "O Heaven! is it then by these phantoms that we have been for six months tormented? Alas! it was from the terror of these spectres, and the noise beneath the mountains, that our people have fled, and left us at the mercy of the malificent spirits!" The caliph, to whom these complaints were but unpromising auguries, drove over the bodies of these wretched old men, and at length arrived at the foot of the terrace of black marble. There he descended from his litter, handing down Nouronihar. Both with beating hearts stared wildly around them, and expected, with an apprehensive shudder, the approach of the Giaour; but nothing as yet announced his appearance.

A death-like stillness reigned over the mountain and through the air; the moon dilated on a vast platform the shades of the lofty columns, which reached from the terrace almost to the clouds; the gloomy watch-towers, whose number could not be counted, were covered by no roof; and their capitals, of an architecture unknown in the records of the earth, served as an asylum for the birds of night, which, alarmed at the approach of such visitants, fled away croaking.

The chief of the eunuchs, trembling with fear, besought Vathek that a fire might be kindled. "No," replied he, "there is no time left to think of such trifles. Abide where thou art, and expect my commands." Having thus spoken, he presented his hand to Nouronihar; and ascending the steps of a vast staircase, reached the terrace, which was flagged with squares of marble, and resembled a smooth expanse of water, upon whose surface not a blade of grass ever dared to vegetate. On the right rose the watch-towers, ranged before the ruins of an immense palace, whose walls were embossed with various figures. In front stood forth the colossal forms of four creatures, composed of the leopard and the griffin, and though but of stone, inspired emotions of terror. Near these were distinguished, by the splendour of the moon, which streamed full on the place, characters like those on the

sabres of the Giaour, and which possessed the same virtue of changing every moment. These, after vacillating for some time, fixed at last in Arabic letters, and prescribed to the caliph the following words : —" Vathek, thou hast violated the conditions of my parchment, and deserveth to be sent back ; but in favour to thy companion, and as the meed for what thou hast done to obtain it, Eblis permitteth that the portal of his palace shall be opened, and the subterranean fire will receive thee into the number of its adorers."

He scarcely had read these words before the mountain, against which the terrace was reared, trembled, and the watch-towers were ready to topple headlong upon them ; the rock yawned, and disclosed within it a staircase of polished marble, that seemed to approach the abyss. Upon each stair were planted two large torches, like those Nouronihar had seen in her vision, the camphorated vapour of which ascended and gathered itself into a cloud under the hollow of the vault.

This appearance, instead of terrifying, gave new courage to the daughter of Fakreddin. Scarcely deigning to bid adieu to the moon and the firmament, she abandoned, without hesitation, the pure atmosphere, to plunge into these infernal exhalations. The gait of those impious personages was haughty and determined. As they descended, by the effulgence of the torches, they gazed on each other with mutual admiration, and both appeared so resplendent that they already esteemed themselves spiritual intelligences. The only circumstance that perplexed them was their not arriving at the bottom of the stairs: on hastening their descent, with an ardent impetuosity, they felt their steps accelerated to such a degree, that they seemed not walking but falling from a precipice. Their progress, however, was at length impeded by a vast portal of ebony, which the caliph without difficulty recognised. Here the Giaour awaited them with the key in his hand. " Ye are welcome !" said he to them, with a ghastly smile, " in spite of Mahomet and all his dependents. I will now usher you into that palace where you have so highly merited a place." Whilst he was uttering these words he touched the enamelled lock with his key, and the doors at once flew open

with a noise still louder than the thunder of the dog days, and as suddenly recoiled the moment they had entered.

The caliph and Nouronihar beheld each other with amazement at finding themselves in a place which, though roofed with a vaulted ceiling, was so spacious and lofty, that at first they took it for an immeasurable plain. But their eyes at length growing familiar to the grandeur of the surrounding objects, they extended their view to those at a distance, and discovered rows of columns and arcades, which gradually diminished, till they terminated in a point radiant as the sun when he darts his last beams athwart the ocean. The pavement, strewed over with gold dust and saffron, exhaled so subtile an odour as almost overpowered them. They, however, went on, and observed an infinity of censers, in which ambergris and the wood of aloes were continually burning. Between the several columns were placed tables, each spread with a profusion of viands, and wines of every species sparkling in vases of crystal. A throng of genii, and other fantastic spirits, of either sex, danced lasciviously at the sound of music which issued from beneath.

In the midst of this immense hall, a vast multitude was incessantly passing, who severally kept their right hands on their hearts, without once regarding any thing around them: they had all the livid paleness of death. Their eyes, deep sunk in their sockets, resembled those phosphoric meteors that glimmer by night in places of interment. Some stalked slowly on, absorbed in profound reverie; some, shrieking with agony, ran furiously about like tigers wounded with poisoned arrows; whilst others, grinding their teeth in rage, foamed along more frantic than the wildest maniac. They all avoided each other; and, though surrounded by a multitude that no one could number, each wandered at random unheedful of the rest, as if alone on a desert where no foot had trodden.

Vathek and Nouronihar, frozen with terror at a sight so baleful, demanded of the Giaour what these appearances might mean, and why these ambulating spectres never withdrew their hands from their hearts? "Perplex not yourselves with so much at once," replied he bluntly; "you

will soon be acquainted with all: let us haste, and present you to Eblis." They continued their way through the multitude: but, notwithstanding their confidence at first, they were not sufficiently composed to examine with attention the various prospective of halls and of galleries, that opened on the right hand and left; which were all illuminated by torches and braziers, whose flames rose in pyramids to the centre of the vault. At length they came to a place, where long curtains, brocaded with crimson and gold, fell from all parts in solemn confusion. Here the choirs and dances were heard no longer. The light which glimmered came from afar.

After some time, Vathek and Nouronihar perceived a gleam brightening through the drapery, and entered a vast tabernacle hung round with the skins of leopards. An infinity of elders with streaming beards, and afrits in complete armour, had prostrated themselves before the ascent of a lofty eminence; on the top of which, upon a globe of fire, sat the formidable Eblis. His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours. In his large eyes appeared both pride and despair: his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light. In his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre, that causes the monster Ouranbad, the afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble. At his presence, the heart of the caliph sunk within him; and he fell prostrate on his face. Nouronihar, however, though greatly dismayed, could not help admiring the person of Eblis; for she expected to have seen some stupendous giant. Eblis, with a voice more mild than might be imagined, but such as penetrated the soul and filled it with the deepest melancholy, said, "Creatures of clay, I receive you into mine empire: ye are numbered amongst my adorers: enjoy whatever this palace affords: the treasures of the pre-adamite sultans: their fulminating sabres; and those talismans, that compel the dives to open the subterranean expanses of the mountain of Kaf, which communicate with these. There, insatiable as your curiosity may be, shall you find sufficient objects to gratify it. You shall possess the exclusive pri-

vilege of entering the fortresses of Aherman, and the halls of Argenk, where are portrayed all creatures endowed with intelligence; and the various animals that inhabited the earth prior to the creation of that contemptible being whom ye denominate the father of mankind."

Vathek and Nouronihar, feeling themselves revived and encouraged by this harangue, eagerly said to the Giaour, "Bring us instantly to the place which contains these precious talismans."—"Come," answered this wicked dive, with his malignant grin,—"come and possess all that my sovereign hath promised, and more." He then conducted them into a long aisle adjoining the tabernacle; preceding them with hasty steps, and followed by his disciples with the utmost alacrity. They reached, at length, a hall of great extent, and covered with a lofty dome; around which appeared fifty portals of bronze, secured with as many fastenings of iron. A funereal gloom prevailed over the whole scene. Here, upon two beds of incorruptible cedar, lay recumbent the fleshless forms of the pre-adamite kings, who had been monarchs of the whole earth. They still possessed enough of life to be conscious of their deplorable condition. Their eyes retained a melancholy motion: they regarded one another with looks of the deepest dejection; each holding his right hand, motionless, on his heart. At their feet were inscribed the events of their several reigns, their power, their pride, and their crimes; Soliman Daki; and Soliman, called Gian Ben Gian, who, after having chained up the dives in the dark caverns of Kaf, became so presumptuous as to doubt of the Supreme Power. All these maintained great state; though not to be compared with the eminence of Soliman Ben Daoud.

This king, so renowned for his wisdom, was on the loftiest elevation, and placed immediately under the dome. He appeared to possess more animation than the rest. Though, from time to time, he laboured with profound sighs; and, like his companions, kept his right hand on his heart, yet his countenance was more composed, and he seemed to be listening to the sullen roar of a cataract visible in part through one of the grated portals. This was the only sound that intruded on the silence of these doleful

mansions. A range of brazen vases surrounded the elevation. "Remove the covers from these cabalistic depositaries," said the Giaour to Vathek; "and avail thyself of the talismans which will break asunder all these gates of bronze; and not only render thee master of the treasures contained within them, but also of the spirits by which they are guarded."

The caliph, whom this omnious preliminary had entirely disconcerted, approached the vases with faltering footsteps; and was ready to sink with terror when he heard the groans of Soliman. As he proceeded, a voice from the livid lips of the prophet articulated these words:—"In my lifetime I filled a magnificent throne; having, on my right hand, twelve thousand seats of gold, where the patriarchs and the prophets heard my doctrines: on my left, the sages and doctors, upon as many thrones of silver, were present at all my decisions. Whilst I thus administered justice to innumerable multitudes, the birds of the air, hovering over me, served as a canopy against the rays of the sun. My people flourished; and my palace rose to the clouds. I erected a temple to the Most High, which was the wonder of the universe: but I basely suffered myself to be seduced by the love of women, and a curiosity that could not be restrained by sublunary things. I listened to the counsels of Aherman, and the daughter of Pharaoh; and adored fire, and the hosts of heaven. I forsook the holy city, and commanded the genii to rear the stupendous palace of Istakar, and the terrace of the watch-towers; each of which was consecrated to a star. There, for a while, I enjoyed myself in the zenith of glory and pleasure. Not only men but supernatural beings were subject also to my will. I began to think, as these unhappy monarchs around had already thought, that the vengeance of Heaven was asleep; when, at once, the thunder burst my structures asunder, and precipitated me hither: where, however, I do not remain, like the other inhabitants, totally destitute of hope; for an angel of light hath revealed that in consideration of the piety of my early youth my woes shall come to an end, when this cataract shall for ever cease to flow. Till then

I am in torments, ineffable torments! an unrelenting fire preys on my heart."

Having uttered this exclamation, Soliman raised his hands towards heaven, in token of supplication; and the caliph discerned through his bosom, which was transparent as crystal, his heart enveloped in flames. At a sight so full of horror, Nouronihar fell back, like one petrified, into the arms of Vathek, who cried out with a convulsive sob, "O Giaour! whither hast thou brought us! Allow us to depart, and I will relinquish all thou hast promised. O Mahomet! remains there no more mercy?"—"None! none!" replied the malicious dive. "Know, miserable prince! thou art now in the abode of vengeance and despair. Thy heart, also, will be kindled like those of the other votaries of Eblis. A few days are allotted thee previous to this fatal period: employ them as thou wilt; recline on these heaps of gold; command the infernal potentates; range, at thy pleasure, through these immense subterranean domains: no barrier shall be shut against thee. As for me, I have fulfilled my mission: I now leave thee to thyself." At these words he vanished.

The caliph and Nouronihar remained in the most abject affliction. Their tears were unable to flow, and scarcely could they support themselves. At length, taking each other, despondingly, by the hand, they went faltering from this fatal hall, indifferent which way they turned their steps. Every portal opened at their approach. The dives fell prostrate before them. Every reservoir of riches was disclosed to their view; but they no longer felt the incentives of curiosity, of pride, or avarice. With like apathy they heard the chorus of genii, and saw the stately banquets prepared to regale them. They went wandering on, from chamber to chamber, hall to hall, and gallery to gallery; all without bounds or limit; all distinguishable by the same lowering gloom; all adorned with the same awful grandeur; all traversed by persons in search of repose and consolation; but who sought them in vain; for every one carried within him a heart tormented in flames. Shunned by these various sufferers, who seemed by their looks to be

upbraiding the partners of their guilt, they withdrew from them to wait, in direful suspense, the moment which should render them to each other the like objects of terror.

"What!" exclaimed Nouronihar; "will the time come when I shall snatch my hand from thine?"—"Ah!" said Vathek, "and shall my eyes ever cease to drink from thine long draughts of enjoyment? Shall the moments of our reciprocal ecstasies be reflected on with horror? It was not thou that broughtest me hither; the principles by which Carathis perverted my youth have been the sole cause of my perdition! it is but right she should have her share of it." Having given vent to these painful expressions, he called to an afrit, who was stirring up one of the braziers, and bade him fetch the Princess Carathis from the palace of Samarah.

After issuing these orders, the caliph and Nouronihar continued walking amidst the silent crowd, till they heard voices at the end of the gallery. Presuming them to proceed from some unhappy beings, who, like themselves, were awaiting their final doom, they followed the sound, and found it to come from a small square chamber, where they discovered, sitting on sofas, four young men, of goodly figure, and a lovely female, who were holding a melancholy conversation by the glimmering of a lonely lamp. Each had a gloomy and forlorn air; and two of them were embracing each other with great tenderness. On seeing the caliph and the daughter of Fakreddin enter, they arose, saluted, and made room for them. Then he who appeared the most considerable of the group, addressed himself thus to Vathek:—"Strangers! who doubtless are in the same state of suspense with ourselves, as you do not yet bear your hand on your heart, if you are come hither to pass the interval allotted, previous to the infliction of our common punishment, condescend to relate the adventures that have brought you to this fatal place; and we, in return, will acquaint you with ours, which deserve but too well to be heard. To trace back our crimes to their source, though we are not permitted to repent, is the only employment suited to wretches like us!"

The caliph and Nouronihar assented to the proposal;

and Vathek began, not without tears and lamentations, a sincere recital of every circumstance that had passed. When the afflicting narrative was closed, the young man entered on his own. Each person proceeded in order; and, when the third prince had reached the midst of his adventures, a sudden noise interrupted him, which caused the vault to tremble and to open.

Immediately a cloud descended, which gradually dissipating, discovered Carathis on the back of an afrit, who grievously complained of his burden. She, instantly springing to the ground, advanced towards her son, and said, "What dost thou here, in this little square chamber? As the dives are become subject to thy beck, I expected to have found thee on the throne of the pre-adamite kings."

"Execrable woman!" answered the caliph; "cursed be the day thou gavest me birth! Go, follow this afrit; let him conduct thee to the hall of the prophet Soliman: there thou wilt learn to what these palaces are destined, and how much I ought to abhor the impious knowledge thou hast taught me."

"Has the height of power, to which thou art arrived, turned thy brain?" answered Carathis: "but I ask no more than permission to show my respect for Soliman the prophet. It is, however, proper thou shouldst know that (as the afrit has informed me neither of us shall return to Samarah) I requested his permission to arrange my affairs, and he politely consented. Availing myself, therefore, of the few moments allowed me, I set fire to the tower, and consumed in it the mutes, negresses, and serpents, which have rendered me so much good service; nor should I have been less kind to Morakanabad, had he not prevented me, by deserting at last to thy brother. As for Bababalouk, who had the folly to return to Samarah, to provide husbands for thy wives, I undoubtedly would have put him to the torture; but being in a hurry, I only hung him, after having decoyed him in a snare, with thy wives, whom I buried alive by the help of my negresses, who thus spent their last moments greatly to their satisfaction. With respect to Dilara, who ever stood high in my favour, she hath evinced the greatness of her mind, by fixing herself

near, in the service of one of the magi; and, I think, will soon be one of our society."

Vathek, too much cast down to express the indignation excited by such a discourse, ordered the afrit to remove Carathis from his presence, and continued immersed in thoughts which his companions durst not disturb.

Carathis, however, eagerly entered the dome of Soliman, and without regarding in the least the groans of the prophet, undauntedly removed the covers of the vases and violently seized on the talismans. Then, with a voice more loud than had hitherto been heard within these mansions, she compelled the dives to disclose to her the most secret treasures, the most profound stores, which the afrit himself had not seen. She passed, by rapid descents, known only to Eblis and his most favoured potentates; and thus penetrated the very entrails of the earth, where breathes the sansar, or the icy wind of death. Nothing appalled her dauntless soul. She perceived, however, in all the inmates who bore their hands on their heart, a little singularity, not much to her taste.

As she was emerging from one of the abysses, Eblis stood forth to her view; but notwithstanding he displayed the full effulgence of his infernal majesty, she preserved her countenance unaltered, and even paid her compliments with considerable firmness.

This superb monarch thus answered:—"Princess, whose knowledge and whose crimes have merited a conspicuous rank in my empire; thou dost well to avail thyself of the leisure that remains: for the flames and torments, which are ready to seize on thy heart, will not fail to provide thee soon with full employment." He said, and was lost in the curtains of his tabernacle.

Carathis paused for a moment with surprise; but resolved to follow the advice of Eblis, she assembled all the choirs of genii, and all the dives, to pay her homage. Thus marched she, in triumph, through a vapour of perfumes, amidst the acclamations of all the malignant spirits, with most of whom she had formed a previous acquaintance. She even attempted to dethrone one of the Solimans, for

the purpose of usurping his place; when a voice, proceeding from the abyss of death, proclaimed, "All is accomplished!" Instantaneously the haughty forehead of the intrepid princess became corrugated with agony: she uttered a tremendous yell; and fixed, no more to be withdrawn, her right hand upon her heart, which was become a receptacle of eternal fire.

In this delirium, forgetting all ambitious projects, and her thirst for that knowledge which should ever be hidden from mortals, she overturned the offerings of the genii; and, having execrated the hour she was begotten and the womb that had borne her, glanced off in a rapid whirl that rendered her invisible, and continued to revolve without intermission.

Almost at the same instant, the same voice announced to the caliph, Nouronihar, the four princes, and the princess, the awful and irrevocable decree. Their hearts immediately took fire, and they, at once, lost the most precious gift of heaven,—HOPE. These unhappy beings recoiled, with looks of the most furious distraction. Vathek beheld in the eyes of Nouronihar nothing but rage and vengeance; nor could she discern aught in his, but aversion and despair. The two princes who were friends, and, till that moment, had preserved their attachment, shrunk back, gnashing their teeth with mutual and unchangeable hatred. Kalilah and his sister made reciprocal gestures of imprecation; all testified their horror for each other by the most ghastly convulsions, and screams that could not be smothered. All severally plunged themselves into the accursed multitude, there to wander in an eternity of unabating anguish.

Such was, and such should be, the punishment of unrestrained passions and atrocious deeds! Such shall be the chastisement of that blind curiosity, which would transgress those bounds the wisdom of the Creator has prescribed to human knowledge; and such the dreadful disappointment of that restless ambition, which, aiming at discoveries reserved for beings of a supernatural order perceives not, through its infatuated pride, that the con-

dition of man upon earth is to be—humble and ignorant.

Thus the caliph Vathek, who, for the sake of empty pomp and forbidden power, had sullied himself with a thousand crimes, became a prey to grief without end, and remorse without mitigation; whilst the humble, the despised Gulchenrouz passed whole ages in undisturbed tranquillity, and in the pure happiness of childhood.

NOTES.

PAGE 1. — *Caliph.*

THIS title, amongst the Mahometans, comprehends the concrete character of Prophet, Priest, and King, and is used to signify *the Vicar of God on Earth.* It is, at this day, one of the titles of the Grand Signior, as successor of Mahomet; and of the Sophi of Persia, as successor of Ali. — *Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 9. *D'Herbelot*, p. 985.

PAGE 1. — *one of his eyes became so terrible.*

The author of Nighiaristan hath preserved a fact that supports this account; and there is no history of Vathek in which his *terrible eye* is not mentioned.

PAGE 1. — *Omar Ben Abdalaziz.*

This caliph was eminent above all others for temperance and self-denial, insomuch that he is believed to have been raised to Mahomet's bosom, as a reward for his abstinence in an age of corruption. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 690.

PAGE 1. — *Samarah.*

A city of the Babylonian Irak; supposed to have stood on the site where Nimrod erected his tower. Khondemir relates, in his life of Motassem, that this prince, to terminate the disputes which were perpetually happening between the inhabitants of Bagdat and his Turkish slaves, withdrew from thence, and having fixed on a situation in the plain of Catoul, there founded Samarah. He is said to have had, in the stables of this city, a hundred and thirty thousand *pied horses*, each of which carried, by his order, a sack of earth to a place he had chosen. By this accumulation an elevation was formed that commanded a view of all Samarah, and served for the foundation of his magnificent palace. — *D'Herbelot*, pp. 752. 808. 985. *Anecdotes Arabes*, p. 413.

PAGE 2. — *in the most delightful succession.*

The great men of the East have been always fond of music. Though forbidden by the Mahometan religion, it commonly makes a part of every entertainment. *Nitimur in vetitum semper.* Female slaves are generally kept to amuse them and the ladies of their harems. The Persian Khanyagere seems nearly to have resembled our old English minstrel; as he usually accompanied his barbut, or lute, with heroic songs. Their musicians appear to have known the art of moving the passions, and to have generally directed their music to the heart. Al Farabi, a philosopher, who died about the middle of the tenth century, on his return from the pilgrimage of Mecca, introduced himself, though a stranger, at the court of Seifeddoula, Sultan of Syria. Musicians

were accidentally performing, and he joined them. The prince admired him, and wished to hear something of his own. He drew a composition from his pocket, and distributing the parts amongst the band, the first movement threw the prince and his courtiers into violent laughter, the next melted all into tears, and the last lulled even the performers asleep. — *Richardson's Dissertation on the Languages, &c. of Eastern Nations*, p. 211.

PAGE 2. — *Mani.*

This artist, whom Inatulla of Delhi styles *the far-famed*, lived in the reign of Schabur, or Sapor, the son of Ardschir Babegan, was founder of the sect of Manichæans, and was, by profession, a painter and sculptor. His pretensions, supported by an uncommon skill in mechanical contrivances, induced the ignorant to believe that his powers were more than human. After having secluded himself from his followers, under the pretence of passing a year in Heaven, he produced a wonderful volume, which he affirmed to have brought from thence; containing images and figures of a marvellous nature.— *D'Herbelot*, p. 548. It appears, from the Arabian Nights, that Haroun al Raschid, Vathek's grandfather, had adorned his palace and furnished his magnificent pavilion with the most capital performances of the Persian artists.

PAGE 2. — *Houris.*

The virgins of Paradise, called, from their large black eyes *, *Hur al oyun.* An intercourse with these, according to the institution of Mahomet, is to constitute the principal felicity of the faithful. Not formed of clay, like mortal women, they are deemed in the highest degree beautiful, and exempt from every inconvenience incident to the sex.— *Al Koran; passim.*

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* Might not Akenside's expression,

"In the dark Heaven of Mira's eye,"

have been suggested by the eyes of the virgins of paradise?

The enthusiam of the acute Winckelmann for the statuary of the ancients was apt to mislead both his judgment and taste. What, but such a bias could induce him to maintain — after asserting that Homer meant by the word βοωπις, to characterise the beauty of Juno's eyes, and citing with approbation ΜΕΛΑΝΟΦΘΑΛΜΟΣ—ΚΑΛΗ ΤΟ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΝ· as the gloss of the scholiast upon it, that the epithet the poet had selected was designed by him to express, not what it naturally imports, but a sense independent of it; and which it could only be supposed to imply, from being placed in an absurd connection? The eye of the animal to which the term belongs is, no doubt, large, if referred to the human countenance; but not properly so, in its own situation. Had Homer applied βοωπις to the statue of Juno, βοωπις (as the Abbé contends) must have been interpreted large-eyed; because in this relation no idea, except that of magnitude [unless we add prominence], could possibly be extorted from it: but it must be allowed, on the same principle, that an epithet taken from the eye of the ass, or any other creature's of equal size, whatever were its colour, would have become the statue of the goddess as well, and signified precisely the same. — On such commentators a poet might justly exclaim,

"——— Pol, me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis!"

In their descriptions of female beauty, the poets of the East frequently use the same image with Homer; and exactly in his sense. Thus, in particular, Lebeid:

"A company of maidens were seated in their vehicles, with black eyes and graceful motions, like the wild heifers of Tudah.'

PAGE 3.—*it was not with the orthodox that he usually held.*

Vathek persecuted, with extreme rigour, all who defended the eternity of the Koran; which the Sonnites, or orthodox, maintained to be uncreated, and the Motazalites and Schiites as strenuously denied.—*D'Herbelot*, p. 85, &c.

PAGE 3. — *Mahomet in the seventh heaven.*

In this heaven, the paradise of Mahomet is supposed to be placed, contiguous to the throne of Alla. Hagi Khalfah relates, that Ben Iatmaiah, a celebrated doctor of Damascus, had the temerity to assert that, when the Most High erected his throne, he reserved a vacant place for Mahomet upon it.

PAGE 3. — *Genii.*

Genn, or *Ginn*, in the Arabic, signifies a Genius or Demon, a being of a higher order, and formed of more subtile matter than man. According to Oriental mythology, the Genii governed the world long before the creation of Adam. The Mahometans regarded them as an intermediate race between angels and men, and capable of salvation; whence Mahomet pretended a commission to convert them. Consonant to this, we read that, *when the* Servant of God *stood up to invoke him, it wanted little but that the* Genii *had pressed on him in crowds, to hear him rehearse the Koran.*—*D'Herbelot*, p. 375. *Al Koran*, ch. 72. It is asserted, and not without plausible reasons, that the words *Genn*, *Ginn*—*Genius*, *Genie*, *Gian*, *Gigas*, *Giant*, *Geant* proceed from the same themes, viz. Γῆ, *the earth*, and Γάω, *to produce;* as if these supernatural agents had been an early production of the earth, long before Adam was modelled out from a lump of it. The Ὤντες and Εὤντες of Plato bear a close analogy to these supposed intermediate creatures between God and man. From these premises arose the consequence that, boasting a higher order, formed of more subtile matter, and possessed of much greater knowledge, than man, they lorded over this planet, and invisibly governed it with superior intellect. From this last circumstance they obtained in Greece the title of Δαίμονες, Demons, from Δάημων, *Sciens*, knowing. The Hebrew word, נפלים, Nephilim (Gen. vi. 4.), translated by *Gigantes*, giants, claiming the same etymon with Νεφέλη, a cloud, seems also to indicate that these intellectual beings inhabited the void expanse of the terrestrial atmosphere. Hence the very ancient fable of men of enormous strength and size revolting against the gods, and all the mythological lore relating to that mighty conflict; unless we trace the origin of this important event to the ambition of Satan, his revolt against the Almighty, and his fall with the angels.

PAGE 3. — *Assist him to complete the tower.*

The genii, who were styled by the Persians *Peries* and *Dives*, were famous for their architectural skill. The pyramids of Egypt have been ascribed to them; and we are told of a strange fortress which they constructed in the remote mountains of Spain, whose frontal presented the following inscription: —

"It is no light task to disclose the portal of this asylum:
The bolt, rash Passenger, is not of iron; but the tooth of a furious Dragon:
Know thou that no one can break this charm,
Till Destiny shall have consigned the key to his adventurous hand."

The Koran relates, that the Genii were employed by Solomon in the erection of his magnificent temple.—*Bailly sur l'Atlantide*, p. 146. *D'Herbelot*, p. 8. *Al Koran*, ch. 34.

The reign of Gian Ben Gian, over the Peris, is said to have continued for two thousand years; after which Eblis was sent by the Deity to exile them, on account of their disorders, and confine them in the remotest region of the earth. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 396. *Bailly sur l'Atlantide*, p. 147.

Page 4. — *the stranger displayed such rarities as he had never before seen.*

In the Tales of Inatulla, we meet with a traveller who, like this, was furnished with trinkets and curiosities of an extraordinary kind. That such were much sought after in the days of Vathek, may be concluded from the encouragement which Haroun al Raschid gave to the mechanic arts, and the present he sent by his ambassadors to Charlemagne. This consisted of a clock, which, when put into motion, by means of a clepsydrum, not only pointed out the hours in their round, but also, by dropping small balls on a bell, struck them, and, at the same instant, threw open as many little doors, to let out an equal number of horsemen. Besides these, the clock displayed various other contrivances.— *Ann. Reg. Franc. Pip. Caroli, &c. ad ann.* 807. *Weidler*, p. 205.

Page 5. — *characters on the sabres.*

Such inscriptions often occur in eastern romances. We find, in the Arabian Nights, a cornelian, on which *unknown characters* were engraven; and, also, a sabre, like those here described. In the French king's library is a curious treatise, intitled *Sefat Alaclam;* containing a variety of alphabets, arranged under different heads; such as the *prophetic*, the *mystical*, the *philosophic*, the *magical*, the *talismanic*, &c. which seems to have escaped the research of the indefatigable Mr. Astle. — *Arabian Nights*, vol. ii. p. 246. vol. i. p. 143. *D'Herbelot*, p. 797.

Page 7. — *endeavoured, by her conversation, to appease and compose him.*

The same sanative quality is ascribed to soothing conversation, both by Æschylus and Milton: —

Οργης νοσουσης εισιν ιατροι λογοι.
Prometh. v. 378.

"Apt words have power to swage
The tumours of a troubled mind;
And are as balm to fester'd wounds."
Samson Agon. v. 184.

Page 8. — *beards burnt off.*

The loss of the beard, from the earliest ages, was accounted highly disgraceful. An instance occurs, in the Tales of Inatulla, of one being *singed off*, as a mulct on the owner, for having failed to explain a question propounded; and, in the Arabian Nights, a proclamation may be seen similar to this of Vathek. — Vol. i. p. 268. vol. ii. p. 228.

Page 9. — *robes of honour, and sequins of gold.*

Such rewards were common in the East. See particularly *Arabian Nights*, vol. ii. pp. 72. 125. vol. iii. p. 64.

PAGE 9. — *The old man put on his green spectacles.*

This is an apparent anachronism; but such frequently occur in reading the Arabian writers. It should be remembered, the difficulty of ascertaining facts and fixing the dates of inventions, must be considerable in a vast extent of country, where books are comparatively few, and the art of printing unpractised. Though the origin of *spectacles* can be traced back, with certainty, no higher than the thirteenth century, yet the observation of Seneca, — that letters appeared of an increased magnitude when viewed through the medium of convex glass — might have been noted also by others, and *a sort of spectacles* contrived, in consequence of it. But, however this might have been, the art of staining glass is sufficiently ancient, to have suggested in the days of Vathek the use of *green*, as a protection to the eye from a glare of light.

PAGE 10. — *The stars, which he went to consult.*

The phrase of the original corresponds with the Greek expression, Αστρα ΒΙΑΖΕΣΘΑΙ· which, in another view, will illustrate St. Matthew, xi. 12.

PAGE 11. — *to drink at will of the Four Fountains.*

Agathocles (cited by Athenæus, l. xi. p. 515.) relates that "there were *certain fountains in these regions*, to the number of seventy, *whose* WATERS *were denominated* GOLDEN; and of which it was death for any one to drink, save *the* KING *and his eldest son.*" In this number, the Four Fountains were formerly reckoned; whose waters, as Vathek had no son, *were* sacred *to his own use.*

The citation from Agathocles may likewise explain the wish of King David, "for *water* from the *well* of *Bethlehem;*" unless we suppose it to have arisen from a predilection, like that of the *Parthian monarchs*, for the water of Choaspes, which was carried with them wherever they went, and, from that circumstance, styled by Tibullus, *regia lympha*, and by Milton,

"The *drink* of *none* but *kings.*"

PAGE 11. — *Bowls of rock crystal.*

In the Arabian Nights, Schemselnihar and Ebn Thaher were served by three of their attendants, each bringing them *a goblet of rock crystal*, filled with curious wine.

PAGE 12. — *Accursed Giaour.*

Dives of this *kind* are frequently mentioned by Eastern writers. Consult their tales in general; and especially those of the Fishermen, Aladdin, and the Princess of China.

PAGE 12. — *Drink this draught, said the stranger, as he presented a phial.*

A phial of a similar potion is ordered to be instantaneously drank off, in one of the Tales of Inatulla. "These brewed inchantments" have been used in the East from the days of Homer. Milton, in his Comus, describes one of them, which greatly resembles the Indian's: —

"And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames, and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm, and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power *to stir up joy as this :*
To *life* so *friendly*, or so *cool* to *thirst.*"

PAGE 12. — *The poets applied them as a chorus to all the songs they composed.*

Sir John Chardin, describing a public entertainment and rejoicing, observes, that the most ingenious poets in Persia (as is related of Homer) sung their own works; which, for the most part, are in praise of the king; whom they fail not to extol, let him be never so worthy of blame and oblivion. The songs of this day were adapted to the occasion of the festival; which was the restoration of the prime minister to his office: he adds, I saw one that abounded in fine and witty turns, the burden of which was this: —

"Him set aside, all men but equals are;
E'n *Sol* survey'd the spacious realms of air,
To see if he could find another star:
A star, that like the *polar star* could reign;
And long he sought it, but he sought in vain." *

The ingenuity of the poet seems to consist in an allusion to the prime minister's title, *Ivon Medave*, or the Pole of Persia.

PAGE 13. — *Bababalouk, the chief of his eunuchs.*

As it was the employment of the *black eunuchs* to wait upon and guard the sultanas; so the general superintendence of the harem was particularly committed to their chief. — *Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 155, 156.

PAGE 14. — *the divan.*

This was both the supreme council and court of justice, at which the caliphs of the race of the Abassides assisted in person, to redress the injuries of every appellant. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 298.

PAGE 14. — *The officers arranged themselves in a semicircle.*

Such was the etiquette, constantly observed, on entering the Divan.—*Arab. Nights*, vol. iv. p. 36. *D'Herbelot*, p. 912.

PAGE 14. — *the prime vizir.*

Vazir, vezir, or, as we express it, vizir, literally signifies a *porter;* and, by metaphor, the minister who bears the principal burden of the state, generally called the Sublime Porte.

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* See Lloyd's Introduction to a Collection of Voyages and Travels, never before published in English, p. 21.

PAGE 15. — *The Indian, being short and plump, collected himself into a ball, &c.*

Happy as Horace has been in his description of the Wise Man, the figurative expressions which finish the character, are literally applicable to our author's Indian : —

> " In seipso totus, teres atque rotundus ;
> Externi ne quid valeat per leve morari :
> In quem manca ruit semper fortuna."

PAGE 16. — *The Muezins and their minarets.*

Valid, the son of Abdalmalek, was the first who erected a *minaret*, or turret ; and this he placed on the grand mosque at Damascus, for the *muezin*, or crier, to announce from it the hour of prayer. This practice has constantly been kept to this day. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 576.

PAGE 18.— *The palace of subterranean fire.*

Of this palace, which is frequently mentioned in Eastern romance, a full description will be found in the sequel.

PAGE 18. — *Soliman Ben Daoud.*

The name of *David* in Hebrew is composed of the letter ו *Vau* between two ד *Daleths* דוד ; and, according to the Masoretic points, ought to be pronounced *David*. Having no U consonant in their tongue, the Septuagint substituted the letter B for V, and wrote Δαβίδ, *Dabid*. The Syriac reads *Dad* or *Dod ;* and the Arabs articulate *Daoud*.

PAGE 19. — *I require the blood of fifty of the most beautiful sons of the vizirs.*

Amongst the infatuated votaries of the powers of darkness, the most acceptable offering was *the blood of their children*. If the parents were not at hand to make an immediate offer, *the magistrates did not fail to select those who were most fair and promising*, that the demon might not be defrauded of his dues. On one occasion, *two hundred of the prime nobility were sacrificed together*. — *Bryant's Observations*, p. 279, &c.

PAGE 21. — *Give them me, cried the Indian.*

In the story of Codadad and his brother, we read of *a Black*, like this, *who fed upon human blood*. — *Arab. Nights*, vol. iii. p. 199.

PAGE 21. — *with the grin of an ogre.*

Thus, in the history of the punished vizir : — "The prince heard enough to convince him of his danger, and then perceived that the lady, who called herself the daughter of an *Indian* king, was an *ogress ;* wife to one of those *savage demons* called an ogre, who stay in remote places, and make use of a thousand wiles to surprise and devour passengers." — *Arab. Nights*, vol. i. p. 56.

PAGE 22. — *bracelet.*

The bracelet, in the East, was an emblem of royalty. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 541. For want of a more proper term to denominate the ornament *serkhooj*, the word *aigret* is here used.

PAGE 24. — *mutes.*

It has been usual, in Eastern courts, from time immemorial, to retain a number of mutes. These are not only employed to amuse the monarch, but also to

instruct his pages, in an art to us little known, of communicating every thing by signs, lest the sounds of their voices should disturb the sovereign. — *Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 164. The mutes are also the secret instruments of his private vengeance, in carrying the fatal string.

PAGE 25. — *Prayer announced at break of day.*

The stated seasons of public prayer, in the twenty-four hours, were five: daybreak, noon, midtime between noon and sunset, immediately as the sun leaves the horizon, and an hour and a half after it is down.

PAGE 25. — *mummies.*

Moumia (from *moum*, wax and tallow), signifies the flesh of the human body preserved in the sand, after having been embalmed and wrapt in cerements. They are frequently found in the sepulchres of Egypt; but most of the Oriental mummies are brought from a cavern near Abin, in Persia. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 647.

PAGE 25. — *rhinoceros' horns.*

Of their extraordinary qualities and application, a curious account may be seen in the Bibliothéque Orientale, and the Supplement to it.

PAGE 25. — *Skulls and skeletons.*

Both were usually added to the ingredients already mentioned. These magic rites sufficiently resemble the witch scenes of Middleton, Shakspeare, &c. to show their Oriental origin. Nor is it to be wondered if, amongst the many systems adopted from the East, this should have been in the number. It may be seen, from the Arabian Tales, that magic was an art publicly taught; and Father Angelo relates of a rich enchanter, whom he knew at Bassora, that his pupils were so numerous, as to occupy an entire quarter of the city.

PAGE 29. — *Flagons of wine, and vases of sherbet reposing on snow.*

Sir John Chardin speaks of a wine much admired in the East, and particularly in Persia, called *roubnar*; which is made from the juice of the pomegranate, and sent abroad in large quantities. The Oriental sherbets, styled by St. Jerom, *sorbitunculæ delicatæ*, consisted of various syrups (such as lemon, liquorice, capillaire, &c.) mixed with water. To these, Hasselquist adds several others, and observes, that the sweet-scented violet is a flower greatly esteemed, not only for its smell and colour, but, especially, for its use in *sherbet*; which, when the Easterns intend to entertain their guests in an elegant manner, is made of a solution of violet-sugar. Snow, in the rinfrescos of a hot climate, is almost a constant ingredient. Thus, in the Arabian Nights, Bedreddin Hassan, having filled a large porcelain bowl with sherbet of roses, put snow into it.

PAGE 29. — *a lamb stuffed with pistachios.*

The same dish is mentioned in the Tale of the Barber's sixth brother.

PAGE 29. — *a parchment.*

Parchments of the like mysterious import are frequent in the writings of the Easterns. One in particular, amongst the Arabians, is held in high veneration. It was written by Ali, and Giafar Sadek, in mystic characters, and is

said to contain the destiny of the Mahometan religion, and the great events which are to happen previous to the end of the world. This parchment is of *camel's skin*; but it was usual with Catherine of Medicis to carry about her person, a legend, in cabalistic characters, inscribed on the skin of a dead-born infant. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 366. *Wraxall's House of Valois.*

PAGE 29. — *Istakhar.*

This city was the ancient Persepolis, and capital of Persia, under the kings of the three first races. The author of Lebtarikh writes, that Kischtab there established his abode, erected several temples to the element of fire, and hewed out, for himself and his successors, sepulchres in the rocks of the mountain contiguous to the city. The ruins of columns and broken figures which still remain, defaced as they were by Alexander, and mutilated by time, plainly evince that those ancient potentates had chosen it for the place of their interment. Their monuments, however, must not be confounded with the superb palace reared by queen Homai, in the midst of Istakhar; which the Persians distinguish by the name of *Tehilminar*, or the forty watch-towers. The origin of this city is ascribed by some to Giamschid, and others carry it higher; but the Persian tradition is, that it was built by the *Peris*, or Faeries, when the world was governed by Gian Ben Gian. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 327.

PAGE 29. — *Gian Ben Gian.*

By this appellation was distinguished the monarch of that species of beings, whom the Arabians denominate *Gian* or *Ginn*; that is, *Genii*; and the Tarikh Thabari, *Peris*, *Fees*, or *Faeries*. He was renowned for his warlike expeditions and stupendous structures. According to Oriental writers, the pyramids of Egypt were amongst the monuments of his power. The buckler of this mighty sovereign, no less famous than that of Achilles, was employed by three successive Solimans, to achieve their marvellous exploits. From them, it descended to Tahamurath, surnamed *Divbend*, or *Conqueror of the* GIANTS. This buckler was endowed with most wonderful qualities, having been fabricated by talismanic art; and was alone sufficient to destroy all the charms and enchantments of demons or giants; which, on the contrary, were wrought by magic. Hence we are no longer at a loss for the origin of the wonderful shield of Atlante.

The reign of Gian Ben Gian over the Peris is said to have continued for two thousand years; after which, EBLIS was sent by the Deity to exile them, on account of their disorders, and confine them in the remotest region of the earth. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 396. *Bailly sur l'Atlantide*, p. 147.

PAGE 29. — *the talismans of Soliman.*

The most famous *talisman* of the East, and which could control even the arms and magic of the dives or giants, was *Mohur Solimani*, the seal or ring of Soliman Jared, fifth monarch of the world after Adam. By means of it the possessor had the entire command, not only of the elements, but also of demons and every created being. — *Richardson's Dissertat.* p. 272. *D'Herbelot*, p. 820.

PAGE 29. — *pre-adamite sultans.*

These monarchs, which were seventy-two in number, are said to have governed each a distinct species of rational beings, prior to the existence of Adam. Amongst the most renowned of them were SOLIMAN RAAD, SOLIMAN DAKI, and SOLIMAN DI GIAN BEN GIAN. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 820.

PAGE 29.—*beware how thou enterest any dwelling.*

Strange as this injunction may seem, it is by no means incongruous to the customs of the country. Dr. Pocock mentions his travelling with the train of the governor of Faiume, who, instead of lodging in a village that was near, passed the night in a grove of palm-trees.—*Travels*, vol. i. p. 56.

PAGE 30.—*every bumper he ironically quaffed to the health of Mahomet.*

There are innumerable proofs that the Grecian custom, συμπιειν κυαθιζομενους, prevailed amongst the Arabs; but, had these been wanted, Carathis could not be supposed a stranger to it. The practice was, to hail the gods in the first place, and then those who were held in the highest veneration. This they repeated as often as they drank. Thus St. Ambrose: "Quid obtestationes potantium loquar? quid memorem sacramenta, quæ violare nefas arbitrantur? Bibamus, inquiunt, pro salute imperatorum; et qui non biberit, sit reus indevotionis.

PAGE 30.—*the ass of Balaam, the dog of the seven sleepers, and the other animals admitted into the paradise of Mahomet.*

It was a tenet of the Mussulman creed, that all animals would be raised again, and many of them honoured with admission to paradise. The story of the seven sleepers, borrowed from Christian legends, was this:—In the days of the Emperor Decius, there were certain Ephesian youths of a good family, who, to avoid the flames of persecution, fled to a secret cavern, and there slept for a number of years. In their flight towards the cave, they were followed by a dog, which, when they attempted to drive back, said,—"*I love those who are dear unto God; go sleep, therefore, and I will guard you.*" For this dog the Mahometans retain so profound a reverence, that their harshest sarcasm against a covetous person is, "He would not throw a bone to the dog of the seven sleepers." It is even said that their superstition induces them to write his name upon the letters they send to a distance, as a kind of talisman, to secure them a safe conveyance.—*Religious Ceremonies*, vol. vii. p. 74. n. *Sale's Koran*, chap. xviii. and notes.

PAGE 30.—*painting the eyes of the Circassians.*

It was an ancient custom in the East, and still continues, to tinge the eyes of women, particularly those of a fair complexion, with an impalpable powder, prepared chiefly from crude antimony, and called *surmeh*. Ebni'l Motezz, in a passage translated by Sir W. Jones, hath not only ascertained its *purple* colour, but also likened the *violet* to it:—

"Viola collegit folia sua, similia
Collyrio nigro, quod bibit lachrymas die discessus,
Velut si esset super vasa in quibus fulgent
Primæ ignis flammulæ in sulphuris extremis partibus."

This pigment, when applied to the inner surface of the lids, communicates to the eye (especially if seen by the light of lamps) so tender and fascinating a languor as no language is competent to express.* Hence the epithet ἰοδλεφαρος,

* When Tasso represents love, as ambushed

——— sotto all' ombra
Delle palpebre—

he allegorically alludes to that appearance in nature, which the artifice here described was meant to counterfeit.

violet-colour eyelids, attributed by the Greeks * to the goddess of beauty; and the Arabian comparison of "the *eyelids* of a fine woman bathed in tears, to violets dropping with dew." Perhaps, also, Shakspeare's

——— violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes—

should be ultimately referred to the same origin. But, however this may be, it is obvious (though his commentators have overlooked it) that Anacreon alluded to the same cosmetic, when he required of the painter that the *eyelids* of his mistress's portrait should, like her own, exhibit this appearance: —

Εχείω δ', όπος εκείνη,
ΒΛΕΦΑΡΩΝ ΙΤΥΝ ΚΕΛΑΙΝΗΝ·

and her eye, both the bright citron † of Minerva's, and the dewy radiance ‡ of Cytherea's: —

Το δε ΒΛΕΜΜΑ νυν αληθως
Απο του πυργος ποιησον·
Αμα ΓΛΑΥΚΟΝ, ὡς ΑΦΗΝΗΣ·
Αμα δ' ΥΓΡΟΝ, ὡς ΚΥΘΗΡΗΣ. §

PAGE 30. — *Rocnabad.*

The stream thus denominated flows near the city of Schiraz. Its waters are uncommonly pure and limpid, and their banks swarded with the finest verdure. Its praises are celebrated by Hafez, in an animated song, which Sir W. Jones has admirably translated: —

"Boy, let yon liquid ruby flow,
And bid thy pensive heart be glad,'

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* Both Homer and Hesiod have applied ΈΛΙΚΟΒΛΕΦΑΡΟΣ to Venus, in a synonymous sense, as is evident from Pliny, who, amongst other properties of the Helix, minutely specifies its purplish flowers. This ὑπογραφὴ οφθαλμων will likewise explain ΈΛΙΚΩΠΙΣ.

Winkelmann and Grævius have each given different interpretations; but, let them both speak for themselves: — Ἑλικοβλεφαρος caractérise des yeux dont les paupières ont un mouvement ondoyant que le Poëte compare au jeune ceps de la vigne. *Hist. de l'Art de l'Antiq.*, tom. II. p. 135. —— Ἑλικοβλεφαροι et ἑλικωπιδες puellæ Græcis dicuntur, qui sunt mobili oculorum petulantia, ut Petron. loquitur, sive quæ habent, ut idem dicit,—

——— blandos oculos et inquietos,
Et quadam propria nota loquaces.

Qui hinc Ovidio dicuntur *arguti*. Aliter plerique sentiunt, et exponunt: *nigros oculos habentes*. Sed ea vera est quam dixi hujus vocis notio, quam facile pluribus confirmarem, nisi res ipsa loqueretur.—*Lectiones Hesiodeæ*, cap. xx.

† "Eyen, bright citrin." Chaucer. No expression can be less exact than blue-eyed, when used as the characteristic of Minerva; nor any, perhaps, more so, than Chaucer's: — unless γλαυκωπις be literally rendered.

‡ ΥΓΡΟΣ·—ὁ ευκαΐαφορος, εις τας ἡδονας ρευμαΐζομενος.

Gloss. Bibl. Coislin. Tasso, in his Jerusalem, has well paraphrased the import of this epithet:

Qual raggio in onda, le scintilla un riso
Negli umidi occhj tremulo e lascivo.

§ Ode xxviii. 18.—2 Kings ix. 30. Ezek. xxiii. 40. D'Herbelot, p. 832. Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, Let. xxix.

Whate'er the frowning zealots say :
Tell them, their Eden cannot show
A stream so clear as Rocnabad,
A bower so sweet as Mosellay."*

PAGE 31. — *Do you, with the advice of my mother, govern.*

Females in the East were not anciently excluded from power. In the story of Zeyn Alasnam and the King of the Genii, the mother of Zeyn undertakes, with the aid of his vizirs, to govern Bassora during his absence on a similar expedition.

PAGE 31.—*Chintz and muslin.*

For many curious particulars relative to these articles, consult Mr. Delaval's Inquiry concerning the Changes of Colours, &c. ; to which may be added, Lucret. lib. iv. 5. Petron. c. 37. Martial, viii. Ep. 28. 17. xiv. Ep. 150. Plutarch. in Vitâ Catonis. Plin. viii. 48.

PAGE 31.—*Serpents and scorpions.*

Various accounts are given of the magical applications of these animals, and the power of sorcerers over them, to which even Solomon referred. Sir John Chardin relates, that at Surat an Armenian, having seen some of these creatures crawl and twine over the naked bodies of children belonging to the charmers, daringly hazarded the same experiment ; but it soon proved fatal to him, for he was bitten, and died in the space of two hours.

PAGE 32.— *she amused herself in curing their wounds.*

Clorin, in the Faithful Shepherdess of Fletcher, possessed the like skill : —

" Of all green wounds I know the remedies,
In men or cattle ; be they stung with snakes,
Or charm'd with powerful words of wicked art ;
* * * * *
These I can cure."

PAGE 32. — *Moullahs.*

Those amongst the Mahometans who were bred to the law had this title ; and from their order the judges of cities and provinces were taken.

PAGE 32. — *the sacred Cahaba.*

That part of the temple at Mecca which is chiefly revered, and, indeed, gives a sanctity to the rest, is a square stone building called the Caaba, probably from its quadrangular form. The length of this edifice, from north to south, is twenty-four cubits, and its breadth, from east to west, twenty-three. The door is on the east side, and stands about four cubits from the ground, the floor being level with the threshold. The Caaba has a double roof, supported internally by three octangular pillars of aloes wood, between which, on a bar of iron, hangs a row of silver lamps. The outside is covered with rich black damask, adorned with an embroidered band of gold. This hanging,

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* Mosella was an oratory on the banks of Rocnabad.

which is changed every year, was formerly sent by the caliphs.—*Sale's Preliminary Discourse*, p. 152.

PAGE 33.—*the tapestry that hung before the door.*

This kind of curtain, at first restricted to the serail, or palace, was afterwards adopted by the great, and gradually became of general use. The author of Leb Tarikh relates, that Lohorashb, King of Persia, having granted to the great officers of his household and army the privilege of giving audience on seats of gold, reserved to himself the right of the *seraperdeh*, or curtain; which was hung before the throne to conceal him from the eyes of his subjects, and thereby preserve their reverence for his person. In later times, the daughter of a law professor, who occasionally, in her father's absence, filled his chair, had recourse to the same expedient, lest the charms of her face should distract her pupil's attention.—*Abbé de Sade's Mémoires de Pétrarque*, tom. i. p. 42.

PAGE 33.—*the supposed oratory.*

The dishonouring such places as had an appearance of being devoted to religious purposes, by converting them to the most abject offices of nature, was an Oriental method of expressing contempt, and hath continued from remote antiquity.—*Harmer's Observations*, vol. ii. p. 493.

PAGE 33.—*regale these pious poor souls with my good wine from Schiraz.*

The prohibition of wine in the Koran is so rigidly observed by the conscientious, especially if they have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, that they deem it sinful to press grapes for the purpose of making it, and even to use the money arising from its sale.—*Chardin, Voy. de Perse*, tom. ii. p. 212. *Schiraz* was famous in the East for its wines of different sorts, but particularly for its *red*, which was esteemed more highly than even the white wine of *Kismische.*

PAGE 34.—*The Caliph, to enjoy so flattering a sight, supped gaily on the roof.*

Dr. Pococke relates, that he was entertained at Galilee by the steward of the Sheik, with whom he *supped on the top of the house.* From a similar motive to Vathek's, Nebuchadnezzar is represented by Daniel as contemplating his capital from the summit of his palace, when he uttered that exulting apostrophe, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?*

PAGE 35.—*the most stately tulips of the East.*

The tulip is a flower of Eastern growth, and there held in great estimation. Thus, in an ode of Mesihi:—"The edge of the bower is filled with the light of Ahmed: among the plants the fortunate *tulips* represent his companions."

PAGE 35.—*eunuchs in the rear.*

As the black eunuchs were the inseparable attendants of the ladies, the rear was, consequently, their post. So, in the argument to the poem of Amriolkais:—"One day, when her tribe had struck their tents, and were changing their

station, the women, as usual, came behind the rest, with the servants and baggage, in carriages fixed on the backs of camels."

PAGE 35. — *certain cages of ladies.*

There are many passages of the Moallakat in which these *cages* are fully described. Thus, in the poem of Lebeid: —

"How were thy tender affections raised, when the damsels of the tribe departed; when they hid themselves in carriages of cotton, like antelopes in their lair, and the tents as they were struck gave a piercing sound!

"They were concealed in vehicles, whose sides were well covered with awnings and carpets, with fine-spun curtains and pictured veils."

Again, Zohair: —

"—— Look, my friend! dost thou not discern a company of maidens seated on camels, and advancing over the high ground above the streams of Jortham?

"They leave on their right the mountains and rocky plains of Kenaan. Oh! how many of my bitter foes, and how many of my firm allies, does Kenaan contain!

"They are mounted in carriages covered with costly awnings, and with rose-coloured veils, the lining of which have the hue of crimson andem-wood.

"They now appear by the valley of Subaan, and now they pass through it; the trappings of all their camels are new and large.

"When they ascend from the bosom of the vale, they sit forward on the saddle-cloths, with every mark of a voluptuous gaiety."—*Moallakat, by Sir W. Jones*, pp. 46. 35. *See also Lady M. W. Montagu*, Let. xxvi.

PAGE 35. — *swagging somewhat awry.*

Amriolkais, in the first poem of the Moallakat, hath related a similar adventure: —

"On that happy day I entered the carriage, the carriage of Onaiza, who said, 'Woe to thee! thou wilt compel me to travel on foot.'

"She added, while the vehicle was bent aside with our weight, 'O Amriolkais, descend, or my beast also will be killed!'

"I answered, 'Proceed, and loosen his rein; nor withhold from me the fruits of thy love, which again and again may be tasted with rapture.

"Many a fair one, like thee, though not like thee a virgin, have I visited by night.'"

PAGE 35.— *dislodged.*

Our language wants a verb, equivalent to the French *denicher*, to convey, in this instance, the precise sense of the author.

PAGE 36.— *those nocturnal insects which presage evil.*

It is observable that, in the fifth verse of the 91st Psalm, the terror by night, is rendered, in the old English version, the bugge by night.* In the first

* Instances are not wanted, both in the English and Greek versions, where the translators have modified the sense of the original by their own preconceived opinions. To this source may be ascribed the Bugge of our old Bible,

settled parts of North America, every nocturnal fly of a noxious quality is still generically named a bug; whence the term bugbear signifies one that carries terror wherever he goes. Beelzebub, or the Lord of Flies, was an Eastern appellative given to the Devil; and the nocturnal sound called by the Arabians azif, was believed to be the howling of demons. Analogous to this is a passage in Comus, as it stood in the original copy: —

> "But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
> With all the grisly legions that troop
> Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
> Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous buggs
> 'Twixt Africa and Inde, I'll find him out."

PAGE 36. — *the locusts were heard from the thickets on the plain of Catoul.*

The insects, here mentioned, are of the same species with the τεττιξ of the Greeks, and the *cicada* of the Latins. The locusts are mentioned in Pliny, b. xi. 29. They were so called, from *loco usto*, because the havoc they made wherever they passed left behind the appearance of a place desolated by fire. How could then the commentators of Vathek say that they are called *locusts*, from their having been so denominated by the first English settlers in America?

PAGE 36. — *halted on the banks of the Tigris.*

It is a practice in the East, and especially when large parties journey together, to halt, if possible, in the vicinity of a stream. Thus Zohair:

"They rose at daybreak: they proceeded at early dawn; they are advancing towards the valley of Ras directly and surely, as the hand to the mouth.

"Now, when they have reached the brink of yon blue gushing rivulet, they fix the poles of their tents, like the Arab, in a settled mansion."

PAGE 36. — *the heavens looked angry, &c.*

This tempest may be deemed somewhat the more violent, from a supposition that Mahomet interfered; which will appear the more probable, if the circumstance of its obliterating the road* be considered. William of Tyre hath recorded one of a similar kind, that visited Baldwin in his expedition against Damascus: — He, against whose will all projects are vain, suddenly overspread the sky with darkness; poured down such torrents of rain, and so entirely effaced the roads, that scarce any hope of escaping

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and (δαιμονιον μεσημβρινον) the noon-day demon of the Seventy, unless the copies of the latter be supposed to have read, not ישוד but ישוד. If the terror by night be taken in connection with the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and both opposed to the arrow that flieth by day, and the destruction that wasteth at noon, it will seem to imply the dread of real evil only, which may be explained, in the language of the poet, by —

> "Night and all her sickly dews —"

but, if the rendering of our old version, adopting that of the Seventy, be founded, it will, also, include the imaginary evils that follow:

> "Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry."

* Exclusive, however, of preternatural interference, it frequently happens, that a sudden blast will arise on the vast deserts of the East, and sweep away, in its eddies, the tracks of the last passenger; whose camel, therefore, in vain, for the wanderer that follows,

> Linquit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis.

remained. These disasters were indeed portended by a gloominess in the air, lowering clouds, irregular gusts of wind, increasing thunders, and incessant lightnings: but, as the mind of man knows not what may befall him, these admonitions of Heaven were slighted and opposed. — *Gesta Dei per Francos*, p. 849.

PAGE 37. — *He determined to cross over the craggy heights, &c. to Roenabad.*

Oriental travellers have sometimes recourse to these expedients, for the sake of abridging the toils of their journies. Hence, Amgrad, in the Arabian Nights, who had himself been about six weeks in travelling from the Isle of Ebene, could not comprehend the possibility of coming in less time; unless by enchantment, or crossing the mountains, which, from the difficulty of the pass, were but seldom traversed.

PAGE 37. — *tigers and vultures.*

The ravages of these animals in the East are almost incredible.

"Before them, Death with shrieks directs their way,
Fills the wild yell, and leads them to their prey."

From the earliest days, they have been the constant attendants on scenes of carnage.

In the Sacred Writings, David threatens "to give the host of the Philistines to the fowls of the air and the wild beasts of the earth."—Antara boasts, at the close of a conflict, of "having left the father of his foes, like a victim, to be mangled by the lions of the wood, and the eagles * advanced in years."— And, in the narrative of the prisoners taken at Bendore, the author relates, that many of them were devoured by tigers and vultures.

PAGE 37. — *Vathek — with two little pages.*

"All the pages of the seraglio are sons of Christians made slaves in time of war, in their most tender age. The incursions of robbers in the confines of Circassia afford the means of supplying the seragho, even in times of peace." — *Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 157. That the pages here mentioned were *Circassians*, appears from the description of their complexion — *more fair than the enamel of Franguestan.*

PAGE 38. — *confectioners and cooks.*

What their precise number might have been in Vathek's establishment it is not now easy to determine; but in the household of the present Grand Seignor there are not fewer than a hundred and ninety. — *Habesci's State*, p. 145.

PAGE 38. — *torches were lighted, &c.*

Mr. Marsden relates, in his History of Sumatra, that tigers prove most fatal and destructive enemies to the inhabitants, particularly in their journeys; and adds, that the numbers annually slain by those rapacious tyrants of the woods

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* Finely as Gray conceived the idea of the eagle, awe-struck at the corses of the bards, there is a langour in his expression, that wants to be removed. Milton, as his best editor judiciously remarks, applied (he might have said confined) the verb *hurry*, to preternatural motion or imaginary beings: adopting it, therefore, in a kindred sense, might we not (for passes) advantageously read —

The famish'd eagle screams, and hurries by —?

are almost incredible. As these tremendous enemies are alarmed at the appearance of fire, it is usual for the natives to carry a splendid kind of torch, chiefly to frighten them, and also to make a blaze with wood in different parts round their villages. — P. 149.

PAGE 38. — *One of the forests of cedar that bordered their way took fire.*

Accidents of this kind, in Persia, are not unfrequent. "It was an ancient practice with the kings and great men to set fire to large bunches of dry combustibles, fastened round wild beasts and birds, which being then let loose, the air and earth appeared one great illumination: and as those terrified creatures naturally fled to the woods for shelter, it is easy to conceive that conflagrations, which would often happen, must have been peculiarly destructive." — *Richardson's Dissertation*, p 185. In the 83d Psalm, v. 14., there is a reference to one of those fires, though arising from another cause; and Homer, likewise, has taken a simile from thence: —

Ηυΐε πυρ ΑΙΔΗΛΟΝ επιφλεγει ασπεΐον ὑλην,
Ουρεος εν κορυφης· ἑκαθεν δε τε φαινεΐαι αυγη·
Π. β. 455.

PAGE 39. — *hath seen some part of our bodies; and, what is worse, our very faces.*

"I was informed," writes Dr. Cooke, "that the Persian women, in general, would sooner expose to public view any part of their bodies than their faces." — *Voyages and Travels*, vol. ii. p. 443.

PAGE 40. — *cakes baked in silver ovens for his royal mouth.*

Protable ovens were a part of the furniture of Eastern travellers. St. Jerome (on Lament. v. 10.) hath particularly described them. The caliph's were of the same kind, only substituting silver for brass. Dr. Pocock mentions his having been entertained in an Arabian camp with cakes baked for him. In what the peculiarity of the royal bread consisted, it is not easy to determine; but, in one of the Arabian Tales, a woman, to gratify her utmost desire, wishes to become the wife of the sultan's baker, assigning for the reason, that she might have her fill of that bread which is called the sultan's. — Vol. iv. p. 269.

PAGE 40. — *vases of snow, and grapes from the banks of the Tigris.*

It was customary in Eastern climates, and especially in the sultry season, to carry, when journeying, supplies of snow. These *æstivæ nives* (as Mamertinus styles them) being put into separate vases, were, by that means, better kept from the air, as no more was opened at once than might suffice for immediate use. To preserve the whole from solution, the vessels that contained it were secured in packages of straw. — *Gesta Dei*, p. 1098. Vathek's ancestor, the CALIPH MAHADI, in the pilgrimage to Mecca, which he undertook from ostentation rather than devotion, loaded upon camels so prodigious a quantity, as was not only sufficient for himself and his attendants amidst the burning sands of Arabia, but also to preserve, in their natural freshness, the various fruits he took with him, and to ice all their drink whilst he staid at Mecca, the greater part of whose inhabitants had never seen snow till then. — *Anecdotes Arabes*, p. 326.

PAGE 40. — *roasted wolf, &c.*

In the poem of Amriolkais, a repast is described, which, in manner of preparation, resembles the present: —

"He soon brings us up to the foremost of the beasts, and leaves the rest far behind: nor has the herd time to disperse itself.

"He runs from wild bulls to wild heifers, and overpowers them in a single heat, without being bathed, or even moistened with sweat.

"Then the busy cook dresses the game, roasting part, baking part on hot stones, and quickly boiling the rest in a vessel of iron."

Disgusting as this refection of Vathek may be thought, Atlante boasts to Ruggiero of having fed him, from his infancy, on a similar diet: —

"Di midolle già d' orsi e di leoni
Ti porsi io dunque li primi alimenti."

and we read, that lion's flesh was prescribed to Vathek, but on a different occasion. — *Anecdot. Arab.* p. 419.

The vegetables that made part of this entertainment were such as the Koran had ordained to be food for the damned.

PAGE 40. — *dropped their fans on the ground.*

Attendants for the same purpose are mentioned in the story of the King of the Black Isles: "One day, while she was at bath, I found myself sleepy after dinner, and lay down upon a sofa. Two of her ladies, who were then in my chamber, came and sat down, one at my head and the other at my feet, with fans in their hands to moderate the heat, and to hinder the flies from disturbing my slumber."— The comfort of such an attendant in the hour of repose can be known only in the climes of intolerable day.

PAGE 41. — *horrible Kaf.*

This mountain, which, in reality, is no other than Caucasus, was supposed to surround the earth, like a ring encompassing a finger. The sun was believed to rise from one of its eminences (as over Oeta, by the Latin poets), and to set on the opposite; whence, *from Kaf to Kaf*, signified, from one extremity of the earth to the other. The fabulous historians of the East affirm, that this mountain was founded upon a stone, called *sakhrat*, one grain of which, according to Lokman, would enable the possessor to work wonders. This stone is further described as the pivot of the earth, and said to be one vast emerald, from the refraction of whose beams the heavens derive their azure. It is added, that whenever God would excite an earthquake, he commands the stone to move one of its fibres (which supply in it the office of nerves), and, that being moved, the part of the earth connected with it quakes, is convulsed, and sometimes expands. Such is the philosophy of the Koran!

The Tarikh Tabari, written in Persian, analogous to the same tradition, relates, that, were it not for this emerald, the earth would be liable to perpetual commotions, and unfit for the abode of mankind.

To arrive at the Kaf, a vast region,

"Far from the sun and summer gale,"

must be traversed. Over this dark and cheerless desert, the way is inextricable without the direction of supernatural guidance. Here the dives or giants were confined, after their defeat by the first heroes of the human race; and here, also, the peries, or faeries, are supposed in ordinary to reside. Sukrage, the giant, was king of Kaf, and had Rucail, one of the children of Adam, for his prime minister. The giant Argenk, likewise, from the time that Tahamurath made war upon him, reigned here, and reared a superb palace in the city of Aherman, with galleries, on whose walls were painted the creatures that inhabited the world prior to the formation of Adam. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 230, &c. &c.

PAGE 41. — *the Simurgh.*

This is that wonderful bird of the East, concerning which so many marvels are told: it was not only endowed with reason, but possessed also the knowledge of every language. Hence it may be concluded to have been a dive in a borrowed form. This creature relates of itself that it had seen the great revolution of seven thousand years twelve times commence and close; and that, in its duration, the world had been seven times void of inhabitants, and as often replenished. The Simurgh is represented as a great friend to the race of Adam, and not less inimical to the dives. Tahamurath and Aberman were apprised by its predictions of all that was destined to befall them, and from it they obtained the promise of assistance in every undertaking. Armed with the buckler of Gian Ben Gian, Tahamurath was borne by it through the air, over the dark desert, to Kaf. From its bosom his helmet was crested with plumes, which the most renowned warriors have ever since worn. In every conflict the Simurgh was invulnerable, and the heroes it favoured never failed of success. Though possessed of power sufficient to exterminate its foes, yet the exertion of that power was supposed to be forbidden. Sadi, a serious author, gives it as an instance of the universality of Providence, that the Simurgh, notwithstanding its immense bulk, is at no loss for sustenance on the mountain of Kaf. Inatulla hath described Getiafrose, queen of the Genii, as seated on a golden chariot, drawn by ten simurghs; whose wings extended wide as the earth-shading bir *, and whose talons resembled the proboscis of

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* —or *Banian*, to which the epithet of Inatulla most emphatically belongs Milton hath accurately described this extraordinary tree, though by another name:

> "The *fig-tree*—not that kind for fruit renown'd;
> But such as at this day to Indians known,
> In Malabar or Decan, spreads her arms,
> Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
> The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
> About the mother tree: a pillar'd shade
> High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between."

Was it not from hence that Warburton framed his hypothesis on the origin of Gothic architecture? At least, here were materials sufficient, for a fancy less forgetive than his. Mr. Ives, in his journey from Persia, thus speaks of this vegetable wonder:—"This is the Indians' sacred tree.—It grows to a prodigious height, and its branches spread a great way. The limbs drop down fibres, which take root and become another tree, united by its branches to the first; and so continue to do, until the trees cover a great extent of ground: the arches which those different stocks make are Gothic, like those we see in Westminster Abbey; the stocks not being single, but appearing as if composed of many stocks, are of a great circumference. There is a certain solemnity accompanying those trees; nor do I remember that I was ever under the cover of any of them, but that my mind was at the time impressed with a reverential awe!"—Page 460.—From the

> ——— pillar'd shade
> High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between;

as well as the

> ——— highest woods, impenetrable
> To star, or sun-light—

just before mentioned, and the name given to the tree, it is probable that the poet's description was principally founded on the account of Duret, who, in the Chapter *Du Figuier d'Inde*, of his singular book (entitled Histoire admirable des plantes et herbes esmerueillables et miraculeuses en nature, &c. à Paris, 1605), thus writes:—"Sa grosseur est quelquefois telle, que trois hommes ne le sçauroient embrasser: quelquefois vn ou deux de ces figuiers font *vn* BOIS *avez grand, touffu, & ombrageux, dans lequel les rayons du* Soleil *ne peuuent aucune-*

mighty elephants: but it does not appear from any other writer, that there ever was more than *one*, which is frequently called the *marvellous gryphon*, and said to be like that imaginary monster. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 1017. 810, &c. *Tales of Inatulla*, vol. ii. pp. 71, 72.

As the *magic shield of Atlante* resembles the *buckler of Gian Ben Gian*, so *his Ippogrif* apparently came from the *Simurgh*, notwithstanding the reference of Ariosto to the veridical Archbishop: —

> " Non ho veduto mai, nè letto altrove,
> Fuor che in Turpin, d'un si fatto animale.

PAGE 41. — *palampores, &c.*

These elegant productions, which abound in all parts of the East, were of very remote antiquity. Not only are *σινδονας* ΕΤΑΝΘΕΙΝ, *finely flowered linens*, noticed by Strabo; but Herodotus relates, that the nations of Caucasus *adorned* their *garments* with *figures of various creatures*, by means of the sap of certain vegetables; which, when macerated and diluted with water, communicate colours that cannot be washed out, and are no less permanent than the texture itself. — *Strabo*, l. xv. p. 709. *Herodot.* l. i. p. 96. The Arabian Tales repeatedly describe these "*fine linens of India, painted in the most lively colours*, and representing *beasts, trees, flowers*, &c." — *Arab. Nights*, vol. iv. p. 217, &c.

PAGE 41. — *afrits.*

These were a kind of Medusæ, or Lamiæ, supposed to be the most terrible and cruel of all the orders of the dives. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 66.

PAGE 41. — *tablets fraught with preternatural qualities.*

Mr. Richardson observes, "that in the East men of rank in general carried with them pocket astronomical tables, which they consulted on every affair of moment." These tablets, however, were of the *magical* kind, and such as often occur in works of romance. Thus, in Boiardo, Orlando receives, from the father of the youth he had rescued, "a book that would solve all doubts;" and, in Ariosto, Logistilla bestows upon Astolpho a similar directory. The books which Carathis turned over with Morakanabad were imagined to have possessed the like virtues.

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ment penetrer, *durant les chaleurs d'Este*, & font ces figuiers infinies *tonnes & cabinets si concaues & couuerts de feuilles & de sinuositez* [ailes and recesses, so arched over with foliage and embowed ramifications], *qu'il s'y fait mes des* Echos *ou reuerberations de voix & sons, jusques à trois fois*; & est telle *la moindre d'vn seul ombre de ses arbres, qu'elle peut contenir soubs soy à couuert huict cens ou mil personnes, & la plus grande ombre, trois mil hommes*," p. 124. — This tree might well be styled the Earth-shading.*

Though the early architecture of our island be confessedly of a doubtful origin, it nevertheless deserves to be noted, that the resemblance between the columns of the ruined chancel at Orford, and those of Tauk Kesserah on the banks of the Tigris, is much too strict to be merely casual. It may be added, that the arches of this edifice, and their ornaments, are of the style we call the early Norman.

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* The following is an account of the dimensions of a remarkable Banyan tree, near Manjee, twenty miles west of Patna, in Bengal. Diameter 365 to 375 feet. Circumference of its shadow at noon, 1116 feet. Circumference of the several stems (in number 50 or 60) 921 feet. *Marsden's History of Sumatra*, p. 131.

PAGE 41. — *dwarfs.*

Such unfortunate beings, as are thus "curtailed of fair proportion," have been, for ages, an appendage of Eastern grandeur. One part of their office consists in the instruction of the pages; but their principal duty is the amusement of their master. If a dwarf happen to be a mute, he is much esteemed; but if he be also an eunuch, he is regarded as a prodigy, and no pains or expense are spared to obtain him. — *Habesci's State of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 164, &c.

PAGE 41. — *a cabin of rushes and canes.*

Huts of this sort are mentioned by Ludeke, in his Expositio brevis Loc. Script. p. 51. Tuguriola seu palis, fruticibus viridibus, vel juncis circumdatis et tectis, amboque quidem facillimè construuntur.

PAGE 42. — *a small spring supplies us with water for the Abdest, and we daily repeat prayers, &c.*

Amongst the indispensable rules of the Mahometan faith, ablution is one of the chief. This rite is divided into three kinds. The first, performed before prayers, is called *Abdest*. It begins with washing both hands, and repeating these words: — "Praised be Alla, who created clean water, and gave it the virtue to purify: he also hath rendered our faith conspicuous." This done, water is taken in the right hand thrice, and the mouth being washed, the worshipper subjoins: — "I pray thee, O Lord, to let me taste of that water which thou hast given to thy prophet Mahomet in paradise, more fragrant than musk, whiter than milk, sweeter than honey; and which has the power to quench for ever the thirst of him that drinks it." This petition is accompanied with sniffing a little water into the nose. The face is then three times washed, and behind the ears; after which water is taken with both hands, beginning with the right, and thrown to the elbow. The washing of the crown next follows, and the apertures of the ear with the thumbs; afterward the neck with all the fingers, and, finally, the feet. In this last operation, it is held sufficient to wet the sandal only. At each ceremonial a suitable petition is offered, and the whole concludes with this: — "Hold me up firmly, O Lord! and suffer not my foot to slip, that I may not fall from the bridge into hell." Nothing can be more exemplary than the attention with which these rites are performed. If an involuntary cough or sneeze interrupt them, the whole service is begun anew, and that as often as it happens. — *Habesci*, p. 91, &c.

PAGE 42. — *reading the holy Koran.*

The Mahometans have a book of stops or pauses in reading the Koran, which divides it into *seventeen* sections, and allows of no more. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 915.

PAGE 42. — *the bells of a cafila.*

A cafila, or caravan, according to Pitts, is divided into distinct companies, at the head of which an officer, or person of distinction, is carried in a kind of horse litter, and followed by a sumpter camel, loaded with his treasure. This camel hath a bell fastened to either side, the sound of which may be heard at a considerable distance. Others have bells on their necks and their legs, to solace them when drooping with heat and fatigue. Inatulla also, in his tales, hath a similar reference: "The bells of the cafila may be rung in the thirsty desert." Vol. ii. p. 15. These small bells were known at Rome from the earliest times, and called from their sounds *tintinnabulum*. Phædrus gives

us a lively description of the mule carrying the fiscal monies: *clarumque collo jactans tintinnabulum.* — Book ii. fabl. vii.

PAGE 42. — *Deggial.*

This word signifies properly a liar and impostor, but is applied by Mahometan writers to their *Antichrist.* He is described as having but one eye and eyebrow, and on his forehead the radicals of *cafer* or *infidel* are said to be impressed. According to the traditions of the faithful, his first appearance will be between Irak and Syria, mounted on an ass. Seventy thousand Jews from Ispahan are expected to follow him. His continuance on earth is to be forty days. All places are to be destroyed by him and his emissaries, except *Mecca* or *Medina*, which will be protected by angels from the general overthrow. At last, however, he will be slain by Jesus, who is to encounter him at the gate of Lud. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 282. *Sale's Prelim. Disc.* p. 106.

PAGE 42. — *dictated by the blessed Intelligence.*

That is, the angel *Gabriel.* The Mahometans deny that the Koran was composed by their prophet; it being their general and orthodox belief, that it is of divine original; nay, even eternal and uncreated, remaining in the very essence of God: that the first transcript has been from everlasting by his throne, written on a table of immense size, called the *preserved table;* on which are also recorded the divine decrees, past and future: that a copy was by the ministry of the angel *Gabriel* sent down to the lowest heaven, in the month of *Ramadan*, on the night of *power*: from whence *Gabriel* revealed it to Mahomet by parcels, some at Mecca, and some at Medina. — *Al Koran*, ch. ii. &c. *Sale's Prelim. Disc.* p. 85.

PAGE 42. — *hath culled with his own hands these melons, &c.*

The great men of the East have ever been, what Herodotus shrewdly styled them, δωροφαγοι, or *gift-eaters:* for no visiter can approach them with empty hands. In such a climate and situation, what present could be more acceptable to Vathek than this refreshing collation?

PAGE 43. — *to kiss the fringe of your consecrated robe.*

This observance was an act of the most profound reverence. — *Arabian Nights*, vol. iv. p. 236, &c.

PAGE 43. — *and implore you to enter his humble habitation.*

It has long been customary for the Arabs to change their habitations with the seasons. Thus Antara:—

"Thou hast possessed thyself of my heart; thou hast fixed thy abode, and art settled there, as a beloved and cherished inhabitant.

"Yet how can I visit my fair one, whilst her family have their *vernal mansion* in Oneizatain, and mine are stationed in Ghailem?"

Xenophon relates, in his Anabasis, that it was customary for the kings of Persia θερίζειν και εαρίζειν, to pass the *summer* and *spring* in Susa and Ecbatana; and Plutarch observes further, that their winters were spent in Babylon, their summers in Media (that is, *Ecbatana*), and the pleasantest part of *spring* in Susa: Καιοι τουσγε Περσων βασιλεας εμαπαιζον εν Βαβυλωνι τον χειμωνα διαγοντας· εν δε Μηδια το θερος· εν δε Σουσοις, το ηδιστον του ΕΑΡΟΣ. — *De Exil.* p. 604. This ΤΟ ΗΔΙΣΤΟΝ of the *vernal season*, is exquisitely described by Solomon: —

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over; it is gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the season of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

PAGE 43. — *an emerald set in lead.*

As nothing, at the opening of spring, can exceed the luxuriant vegetation of these irriguous valleys, so, no term could be chosen more expressive of their verdure. The prophet Ezekiel, emblematising Tyre under the symbol of Paradise, hath described, by the different gems of the East, the flowers that variegate its surface; and particularly, by the *emerald*, its green: "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: כל־אבן יקרה מסכתך — *thy carpet was an assemblage of every precious stone;* the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the chrysolite, the onyx, and the jasper; the sapphire, the *emerald.*" *— Ch. xxviii. 13. It hath not, perhaps, been hitherto observed, that the *Paradise* of Ariosto was copied from hence: —

"Zaffir, rubini, oro, topazj, e perle,
E diamanti, e chrysoliti, e giacinti
Potriano i fiori assimigliar, che per le
Liete piagge v' avea l' aura dipinti.
Si *verdi l' erbe*, che potendo averle
Qua giù, ne foran gli *smeraldi* vinti."
Canto xxxiv. st. 49.

When Gray, in his description of Grasmere, spoke of its "*meadows green* as an *emerald*" — he might have added, also, the circumstance noted by our author, beset with mountains of the hue of *lead.* Shakspeare, in a similar comparison, hath denominated our *green* England,

"This *precious stone* set in the *silver* sea."

PAGE 43. — *sugar.*

Dr. Pocock mentions the sugar-cane as a great dessert in Egypt; and adds, that, besides coarse loaf sugar and sugar candy, it yields a third sort, remarkably fine, which is sent to the Grand Seignor, and prepared only for himself. — *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 183. 204. The jeweller's son, in the Story of the Third Calender, desires the prince to fetch some *melon* and *sugar*, that he might refresh himself with them. — *Arab. Nights*, vol. i. p. 159.

PAGE 43. — *red characters.*

The laws of Draco are recorded by Plutarch, in his Life of Solon, to have been written in blood. If more were meant by this expression, than that those laws were of a sanguinary nature, they will furnish the earliest instance of the use of *red characters*, which were afterwards considered as appropriate to su-

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* The same kind of imagery abounds in the Oriental poets. Thus, Abu Nawas: —

"Behold the gardens of the earth, and consider the emblems of those things which Divine power hath formed: *eyes of silver* (daisies) every where disclosed, with pupils like molten gold, united to an emerald stalk: these avouch that no one is equal to God."

So, likewise, Sadi: —

"He hath planted rubies and emeralds on the hard rock: the ruby rose on its emerald stem."

And Ebn Rumi, of the violet: —"It is not a flower, but an emerald bearing a purple gem."

preme authority, and employed to denounce some requisition or threatening design to strike terror. According to Suidas, this manner of writing was, likewise, practised in *magic rites*. Hence their application in the instance here mentioned. Trotz in *Herm. Hugonem*, pp. 106. 307. Suidas sub voc. Θήλαλη γυνη.

PAGE 43. — *thy body shall be spit upon.*

There was no mark of contempt amongst the Easterns so ignominious as this. — *Arab. Nights*, vol. i. p. 115. vol. iv. p. 275. It was the same in the days of Job. Herodotus relates of the Medes, ΠΤΥΕΙΝ αἴσιον ΑΙΣΧΡΟΝ εἶναι, and Xenophon relates, ΑΙΣΧΡΟΝ εἶναι Περσαις το ΑΠΟΠΤΥΕΙΝ. Hence the reason is evident for spitting on our Saviour.

PAGE 43. — *bats will nestle in thy belly.*

Bats in these countries were very abundant, and, both from their numbers and nature, held in abhorrence. See what is related of them by Thevenot, part i. pp. 132, 133., *Egmont and Hayman*, vol. ii. p. 87., and other travellers in the East.

PAGE 44. — *the Bismillah.*

This word (which is prefixed to every chapter of the Koran except the ninth) signifies, "in the name of the most merciful God." It became not the initiatory formula of prayer till the time of Moez the Fatimite. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 326.

Ablution is of an origin long prior to Mahomet. It is mentioned in Homer, and alluded to by the Psalmist: —

"I will *wash my hands in innocency*, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord."

Again: "Verily have I cleansed my heart in vain, and *washed my hands in innocency.*"

PAGE 44. — *a vast wood of palm trees.*

Perhaps the palm is nowhere more abundant than in this region, *that* only excepted to which Virgil refers, in a passage as yet not explained: —

"Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas."

If the ingenuousness and delicacy of a right reverend critic (who is said to have owed his present dignity to a note on the context) had not been long known*, an ordinary reader might be startled at the resemblance between his lordship's critique and Catrou's; whilst a fastidious one, in a splenetic mood, might apply, like another Edwards, *the marks of imitation*, as so many *canons* to annoy their founder. The hypothesis, however, of Hartley, Priestly, and those other physiologists, who have so clearly deduced the phænomena of mind from organisation, and traced back the coincidences of thought to predisposing motives and similar associations, will enable us, on the idea of an internal conformity between the critics, to account for their congruity of writing, without leaving room to surmise, that the one ever heard of the other. Not a breath then of Achan, and his wedge of gold!

Catrou, supposing that Virgil meditated the improvement of his writings, after an excursion to Greece and Asia, translates *ego in* patriam *rediens*, by *à*

* See the Tract entitled "On the Delicacy of Friendship, a seventh dissertation, addressed to the author of the sixth."

mon retour en ITALIE; but the restricted sense in which the poet delights to apply *patria* (as in his first Eclogue: —

" Nos *patriæ* fines, et dulcia linquimus arva,
Nos *patriam* fugimus"——)

as well as the mention of *Mantua* and the *Mincius*, precludes this more extended construction. If, therefore, *ego in* patriam *redeo* be literally taken, it will rather mark the design of Virgil to retire from Rome to the sequestered scenes of his *native Mantua;* where he was first smitten with the love of song, and whither he purposes to bring the sisterhood of the muses. But, the clause least understood, is that which immediately follows: —

" Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas."

Catrou hath inferred from it, that Virgil actually projected a voyage to the Levant—to fetch palms, no doubt! The bishop, however, after remarking that the poet, having held himself forth as a conqueror, and declared the object of his conquest to have been bringing the Muses captive from Greece, subjoins " The *palmy* triumphal entry, which was usual to victors on their return from foreign successes, follows —

" Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas."

But, with the deference due to so venerable a critic, will this explication suffice? for, may it not be asked,—If to celebrate a triumph for foreign successes, *palms* from Idumæa were requisite? if victors were accustomed to go thither for them, previous to their triumphal entry? or, (allowing Idumæas to be, sine mente sonum, a word without meaning*) how it could happen that the palmy triumphal entry should have been usual to victors, and yet Virgil the first, whose success was to be graced with it?

" Primus Idumæas referam — palmas."

It is observable that this book of the Georgics opens with proposing its subject, the novelty of which induces the author to remark that, as the usual themes of the Roman poets were all become trite, it would be his aim to seek fame from foreign acquisitions, and his purpose to aggrandise the glory of his country by subjecting to its language the poetical beauties of Greece and Judea.

If it be admitted that, under the allegory of leading the Muses (who were peculiar to Greece) from the summit of the Aonian mount, the poet intended to characterise the loftiest flights of Grecian poetry, or the Epic †; it follows from parity of reason, that, under the symbol of their country ‡, he equally designed the prophetic strains of the Hebrews:

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* Thus, also, Martyn, because Idumæa was famous for 'palms,' interprets Idumæas palmas, " palms, in general;" and Heyne: *Idumæas* autem palmas poetico plane epitheto appellabat, a nobili aliquo genere;" yet, he immediately adds: " *Idumæa* poetæ pro Idumæa ac *tota Judæa* dicunt, quam quidem palmis frequentem fuisse notum est: — arbusto palmarum dives Idume. *Lucan.* iii. 216."

† It was in this light that the Æneis was regarded by Propertius, who exclaims in reference to it (B. II. El. xxxiv. v. 65.)

—— Cedite Graii,
Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade!

" The author of an elegant and masterly pamphlet, entitled *Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid* (published by Elmsly, 1770), supposes Propertius, in the context, to have had his eye on the shield of Æneas; but, from comparing the passage itself with the sixth elegy of the fourth book, it appears more likely that he alluded to the battle of Actium, as described in Æn. viii. 704.

‡ It was by this emblem that the Romans, on their coins, represented Judea; and particularly on the medal, to signalise its reduction:

" Beneath her Palm here sad Judea weeps."

> "Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit,
> Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas :
> Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas."

The verb *referam* in connection with *tibi Mantua*, implies that Virgil had already brought Idumæan palms to his natal soil; and what these meant is abundantly plain. For, whoever will compare the Fourth Eclogue with the prophecy of Isaiah, must perceive too close an agreement to suppose that the same images, under similar combinations, and both new to a Roman poet, should have occurred to Virgil rather from chance, than a previous perusal of the prophet * in Greek.

It only remains, then, to be enquired, whether Virgil, after having introduced in his pastorals some of the prophetic traits of Hebrew poetry, any further availed himself of it in the Epic here projected? For a satisfactory answer to this question, it might suffice to reply, that if there be any characteristic which discriminates the Æneid more than another, it is the prophetic —

> "In medio mihi Cæsar erit, templumque tenebit."

As in the Pollio, the images employed by the prophet to prefigure the birth of the Messiah, and the blessings of his reign, were applied by the Roman poet to the birth of the expected son of Augustus †, and the return of the golden age under his auspices; so, in the Æneid, he resumes the prediction, and applies it to Augustus himself: —

> "Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti sæpius audis
> Augustus Cæsar, divi genus; aurea condet
> Sæcula qui rursus Latio, regnata per arva
> Saturno quondam; super et Garamantas et Indos
> Proferet Imperium. Jacet extra sidera tellus
> Extra anni solisque vias," &c.
> *Æn.* vi. 792.

PAGE 44. — *inscription.*

Inscriptions of this sort are still retained. Thus Ludeke — Interni non solum Divani pluriumque conclavium parietes, sed etiam frontispicia super portas inscriptiones habent. — *Expositio*, p. 54. In the history of Amine, we find an inscription over a gate, in letters of gold, analogous to this of Fakreddin: "Here is the abode of everlasting pleasures and content." — *Arab. Nights*, vol. i. p. 193.

PAGE 45. — *a magnificent tecthtrevan.*

This kind of *moving throne*, though more common at present than in the days of Vathek, is still confined to persons of the highest rank.

PAGE 45. — *her light brown hair floated in the hazy breeze of the twilight.*

Literally, hyacinthine. The metaphor taken from this flower, expressed by the word *Sunbul*, is familiar to the Arabians. Thus, in Sir William Jones's Solima, an eclogue made up of Eastern images, —

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* Tacitus mentions the ancient scriptures of the Jewish priests, as containing the prediction which Virgil is here supposed to have adopted. *Hist.* l. v. § 13.

† By Scribonia, then pregnant of the infamous Julia. See Bishop Chandler's Vindication, and Masson's Dissertation subjoined.

"The fragrant hyacinths of Azza's hair,
That wanton with the laughing summer air."

Nor was it less common to the Greeks. Perhaps, Milton, in the following lines,—

"Hyacinthin locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustring, but not beneath his shoulders broad" —

adopted it from Lucian. The term *manly*, with the restriction at the close, gives full scope for this conjecture; as in Lucian, the descriptions relate only to *women*. The poet may be further traced upon the snow of the classics, in the use of the term clustering; an equivalent expression being appropriated by the ancients to that disposition of the curls which resembles the growth of grapes, and may be observed on gems, coins, and statues. — *Plutarch Consol. Apoll.* p. 196.

It is singular that both Lexicographers and critics should have considered βοτρυοχαίτης and βοτρυοκόσμος, as synonymous. This confusion, however, appears to have arisen from both being attributes of Bacchus; whose hair was not only adorned with clusters from the vine, but, like the locks of Apollo (πλόκαμοι ΒΟΤΡΥΟΕΝΤΕΣ. Apollon, Αγγον B. 677.), was itself clustering.*

Sir William Jones acutely conjectures, that Solomon alluded to the hair, in that elliptical speech of the Shulamite, Song, i. 14. —

אשכל הכפר דודי לי
בכרמי עין גדי

"A cluster of grapes, &c."

The like epithet, though adopted from a different fruit, occurs in the poem of Amriolkais:

"Her long coal-black hair decorated her back, thick and diffused, like bunches of dates, clustering on the palm tree."

The diffusion of hair here noticed, and its floating as described by our author, are circumstances so frequent in the works of Hafez and Jami, that there is scarce a page of them in which the idea of the breeze playing with the tresses of a beautiful girl, is not agreeably and variously expressed.† An instance from Petrarch, resembling their manner, may be seen in the lines that follow:—

"Aura, che quelle chiome bionde e crespe
Circondi, e movi, e se' mossa da loro
Soavemente, e spargi quel dolce oro,
E poi'l raccogli, e'n bei nodi'l rincrespe."
Son. cxci.

PAGE 45.—*your ivory limbs.*

The Arabians compare the skin of a beautiful woman to the egg of the ostrich, when preserved unsullied. ‡ Thus Amriolkais:—

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* Winckelmann hath strangely fixed upon the reverse of this character, as an exclusive property of these divinities; and so infallible a criterion does he make it, as even from it alone to ascertain their mutilated statues. *Hist. de l'Art d'Antiq.* tom. ii. p. 146.—However, in another part of his work, he refers to Plutarch, as cited above.

† Preface to Jones's Poems, p. xii.

‡ A fair skin is likened by the Italian poets to curd: thus, Bracciolini:

——— i suoi teneri membri un latte sieno
Che tremolante, ma non rotto ancora,
Pose accorto Pastor su i verdi giunchi.
Amoroso Sdegno, iii. 2.

"Delicate was her shape; fair her skin; and her body well proportioned: her bosom was as smooth as a mirror, —

"Or like the pure egg of an ostrich, of a yellowish tint blended with white."

Also the Koran: — "Near them shall lie the virgins of Paradise, refraining their looks from beholding any besides their spouses, having large black eyes, and resembling the eggs of an ostrich, covered with feathers from dust." — *Moallakat*, p. 8. *Al Koran*, ch. 27.

But though the Arabian epithet be taken from thence, yet the word ivory is substituted, as more analogous to European ideas, and not foreign from the Eastern. Thus Amru: —

"And two sweet breasts, smooth and white as vessels of ivory, modestly defended from the hand of those who presume to touch them." — *Moallakat*, p. 77.

PAGE 45. — *baths of rose-water.*

The use of perfumed waters for the purpose of bathing is of an early origin in the East, where every odoriferous plant sheds a richer fragrance than is known to our more humid climates. The rose which yields this lotion is, according to Hasselquist, of a beautiful pale blush colour, double, large as a man's fist, and more exquisite in scent than any other species. The quantities of this water distilled annually at Fajhum, and carried to distant countries, is immense. The mode of conveying it is in vessels of copper coated with wax. — *Voyag.* p. 248. Ben Jonson makes Volpone say to Celia, —

"Their bath shall be the juyce of gillyflowres,
Spirit of roses, and of violets."

PAGE 45. — *amuse you with tales.*

Thus, in the story of Alraoui: — "There was an emir of Grand Cairo, whose company was no less coveted for his genius than his rank. Being one day in a melancholy mood, he turned towards a courtier, and said: 'Alraoui, my heart is dejected, and I know not the cause; relate to me some pleasant story, to dispel my chagrin. Alraoui replied: 'The great have with reason regarded tales as the best antidote to care; if you will allow me, I will tell you my own.'" — Translated from one of the unpublished MSS. mentioned in the Preface. "The *Arabian Nights*," saith Colonel Capper, in his Observations on the Passage to India through Egypt and across the great Desert, "are by many people supposed to be a spurious production, and are therefore slighted in a manner they do not deserve. They are written by an Arabian, and are universally read and admired throughout Asia, by persons of all ranks, both old and young. Considered, therefore, as an original work, descriptive as they are of the manners and customs of the East in general, and also of the genius and character of the Arabians in particular, they surely must be thought to merit the attention of the curious; nor are they, in my opinion, entirely destitute of merit in other respects; for although the extravagance of some of the stories is carried too far, yet, on the whole, one cannot help admiring the fancy and invention of

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Likewise, Tasso:

——— egli rivolse
I cupidi occhi in quelle membra belle,
Che, come suole tremolare, il latte
Ne giunchi, si parean morbide, e bianche.
Aminta, iii. 1.

the author, in striking out such a variety of pleasing incidents. Pleasing, I call them, because they have frequently afforded me much amusement; nor do I envy any man his feelings who is above being pleased with them; but, before any person decides on the merit of these books, he should be eye-witness of the effects they produce on those who best understand them. I have, more than once, seen the Arabians on the Desert, sitting round a fire, listening to these stories with such attention and pleasure, as totally to forget the fatigue and hardship with which, an instant before, they were totally overcome. In short, they are held in the same estimation all over Asia, as the adventures of Don Quixote are in Spain."

If the observation of the Knight of la Mancha, respecting translation in general, be just, — "me parece, que el traducir de una lengua en otra, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el reves, que aunque se ven las figuras, son llenas de hilos que las escurecen, y no se ven con la lisura y tez de la haz," — the wrong side of tapestry will represent more truly the figures on the right, notwithstanding the floss that blurs them, than any version, the precision and smoothness of the Arabian surface. The prospect of a rich country in all the glories of summer, is not more different from its November appearance, than the original of those tales when opposed to the French translation, of which, it may be added, our version is, at best, but a moonlight view: —

——— "pallida la luna
Tingea d' un lume scolorito e incerto
La vasta solitudine terrena.

PAGE 45. — *lamb à la crême.*

No dish among the Easterns was more generally admired. The caliph Abdolmelek, at a splendid entertainment, to which whoever came was welcome, asked Amrou, the son of Hareth, what kind of meat he preferred to all others. The old man answered, "An ass's neck, well seasoned and roasted." — "But what say you," replied the caliph, "to the leg or shoulder of a LAMB *à la crême?*" and added, —

"How sweetly we live if a shadow would last!"

— *M. S. Laud. Numb.* 161. *A. Ockley's Hist. of the Saracens*, vol. ii. p. 277.

PAGE 45. — *made the dwarfs dance against their will.*

Ali Chelebi al Moufti, in a treatise on the subject, held that dancing, after the example of the derviches, who made it a part of their devotion, was allowable. But in this opinion he was deemed to be heterodox; for Mahometans, in general, place dancing amongst the things that are forbidden. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 98.

PAGE 45. — *durst not refuse the commander of the faithful.*

The mandates of Oriental potentates have ever been accounted irresistible. Hence the submission of these devotees to the will of the caliph. — *Esther*, i. 19. *Daniel*, vi. 8. *Ludeke Expos. brevis*, p. 60.

PAGE 45. — *he spread himself on the sofa.*

The idiom of the original occurs in Euripides, and is from him adopted by Milton. —

Ιδε῎ε τον Γερουτ᾽ α-
μαλον επι τεδω
ΧΥΜΕΝΟΝ· ω ταλας.

Heraclidæ, v. 75.

"See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
With languish'd head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandon'd
And by himself given over."

Sampson, v. 118.

PAGE 46. — *properly lubricated with the balm of Mecca.*

Unguents, for reasons sufficiently obvious, have been of general use in hot climates. According to Pliny, "at the time of the Trojan war, they consisted of oils perfumed with the odours of flowers, and chiefly of ROSES," — whence the 'ΡΟΔΟΕΝ ἔλαιον of Homer. Hasselquist speaks of oil impregnated with the tuberose and jessamine; but the unguent here mentioned was preferred to every other. Lady M. W. Montagu, desirous to try its effects, seems to have suffered materially from having improperly applied it.

PAGE 46. — *if their eyebrows and tresses were in order.*

As perfuming and decorating the hair of the sultanas was an essential duty of their attendants, the translator hath ventured to substitute the term *tresses*, for another more exact to the original. In Don Quixote, indeed, a waiting woman of the duchess mentions the same services with our author, but as performed by persons of her own sex: — "Hay en Candaya mugeres que andan de casa en casa á quitar el vello, y á pulir las cejas, y hacer otros menjurges tocantes a mugeres, nosotras las dueñas de mi señora por jamas quisímos admitirlas, porque las mas oliscan á tarceras." Tom. iv. cap. xl. p. 42.

Other offices of the dressing-room and toilet may be seen in Lucian, vol. ii. *Amor.* 39. p. 441. The Arabians had a preparation of antimony and galls, with which they tinged the eyebrows of a beautiful black; and great pains were taken to shape them into regular arches. In combing the hair, it was customary to sprinkle it with perfumes, and to dispose it in a variety of becoming forms. — *Richardson's Dissertat.* p. 481. *Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters.*

PAGE 46. — *the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time.*

The Mahometans boast of a doctor who is reported to have read over the Koran not fewer than twenty thousand times. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 75.

PAGE 46. — *black eunuchs, sabre in hand.*

In this manner the apartments of the ladies were constantly guarded. Thus, in the Story of the Enchanted Horse, Firouz Schah, traversing a strange palace by night, entered a room, "and by the light of a lantern saw that the persons he had heard snoring were black eunuchs with naked sabres by them, which was enough to inform him that this was the guard-chamber of some queen or princess." — *Arabian Nights*, vol. iv. p. 189.

PAGE 47. — *Nouronihar, daughter of the Emir, was sprightly as an antelope, and full of wanton gaiety.*

Solomon has compared his bride to "a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots;" Horace, a sportive young female to an untamed filly; Sophocles, a

delicate virgin to a wild heifer; Ariosto, Angelica to a fawn or kid; and Tasso, Erminia to a hind; but the object of resemblance adopted by our author, is of superior beauty to them all.

PAGE 47. — *to let down the great swing.*

The swing was an exercise much used in the apartments of the Eastern ladies, and not only contributed to their health, but also to their amusement. — *Tales of Inatulla*, vol. i. p. 259.

PAGE 47. — *I accept the invitation of your honied lips.*

I necessmon as this idiom may appear in our language, it was not so, either to the Hebrew or the Greek. Compare Proverbs xvi. 24. —

צוף־דבש אמר־נעם

with Homer, Iliad α. 249. —

Του και απο γλωσσης ΜΕΛΙΤΟΣ γλυκιων ῥεεν αυδη.

Theocritus, Idyl. xx. 26. —

—— Εκ ΣΤΟΜΑΤΩΝ δε
Ερῥεε μοι ΦΩΝΑ γλυκερωτερα ἡ ΜΕΛΙΚΗΡΩ.

And Solomon's Song, iv. 11. —

נפת תטפנה שפתותיך כלה
דבש ———

with Moschus, Idyl. i. 9. —

—— —— ἁδυ ΛΑΛΗΜΑ·
—— —— ὡς ΜΕΛΙ, φωνα.

An Arabian fabulist, enumerating the charms of a consummate beauty, hath used the identical expression of our author; but, probably, in an extended sense, as,

——" from her lip
Not words alone pleased him."

PAGE 47. — *my senses are dazzled with the radiance that beams from your charms.*

Or to express an idiom for which we have no substitute), thy countenance, rayonnante de beautés et de graces. Descriptions of this kind are frequent in Arabian writers; thus, Tarafa:

" Her face appears to be wrapped in a veil of sun-beams."

And, in the Arabian Nights: " Schemselnihar came forward amongst her attendants with a majesty resembling the sun amidst the clouds; which receive his splendour, without concealing his lustre." To account for this compliment in the mouth of Bababalouk, we should remember that he was, ex officio, *elegans formarum Spectator.*

PAGE 48. — *melodious Philomel, I am thy rose.*

The passion of the nightingale for the rose is celebrated over all the East. Thus Mesihi, as translated by Sir W. Jones: —

"Come, charming maid, and hear thy poet sing,
Thyself the rose, and he the bird of spring:
Love bids him sing, and love will be obey'd,
Be gay: too soon the flowers of spring will fade."

PAGE 48.—*oil spilt in breaking the lamps.*

It appears from Thevenot that illuminations were usual on the arrival of a stranger, and he mentions, on an occasion of this sort, two hundred lamps being lighted. The quantity of oil, therefore, spilt by Bababalouk may be easily accounted for from this custom.

PAGE 48.—*reclining on down.*

See Lady M. W. Montagu. Let. xxvi.

PAGE 49.—*calenders.*

These were a sort of men amongst the Mahometans who abandoned father and mother, wife and children, relations and possessions, to wander through the world, under a pretence of religion, entirely subsisting on the fortuitous bounty of those they had the address to dupe.—*D'Herbelot, Suppl.* p. 204.

PAGE 49.—*santons.*

A body of religionists, who were also called *abdals*, and pretended to be inspired with the most enthusiastic raptures of divine love. They were regarded by the vulgar as *saints.*—*Olearius*, tom. i. p. 971. *D'Herbelot*, p. 5.

PAGE 49.—*derviches.*

The term *dervich* signifies a *poor man*, and is the general appellation by which a religious amongst the Mahometans is named. There are, however, discriminations that distinguish this class from the others already mentioned. They are bound by no vow of poverty, they abstain not from marriage, and, whenever disposed, they may relinquish both their blue shirt and profession.—*D'Herbelot, Suppl.* 214.—It is observable, that these different orders, though not established till the reign of Nasser al Samani, are notwithstanding mentioned by our author as coeval with Vathek, and by the author of the Arabian Nights, as existing in the days of Haroun al Raschid; so that the Arabian fabulists appear as inattentive to chronological exactness in points of this sort as our immortal dramatist himself.

PAGE 49.—*Bramins.*

These constituted the principal caste of the Indians, according to whose doctrine *Brahma*, from whom they are called, is the first of the three created beings by whom the world was made. This Brahma is said to have communicated to the Indians four books, in which all the sciences and ceremonies of their religion are comprised. The word Brahma, in the Indian language, signifies *pervading all things.* The Brahmins lead a life of most rigid abstinence, refraining not only from the use, but even the touch, of animal food; and are equally exemplary for their contempt of pleasures and devotion to philosophy and religion.—*D'Herbelot*, p. 212. *Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph.* tom. i. p. 194.

PAGE 49. — *faquirs.*

This sect were a kind of religious anchorets, who spent their whole lives in the severest austerities and mortification. It is almost impossible for the imagination to form an extravagance that has not been practised by some of them, to torment themselves. As their reputation for sanctity rises in proportion to their sufferings, those amongst them are reverenced the most, who are most ingenious in the invention of tortures, and persevering in enduring them. Hence some have persisted in sitting or standing for years together in one unvaried posture, supporting an almost intolerable burden, dragging the most cumbrous chains, exposing their naked bodies to the scorching sun, and hanging with the head downward before the fiercest fires. — *Relig. Ceremon.* vol iii. p. 264, &c. *White's Sermons*, p. 504.

PAGE 49. — *some that cherished vermin.*

In this attachment they were not singular. The Emperor Julian not only discovered the same partiality, but celebrated, with visible complacency, the shaggy and *populous* beard which he fondly cherished; and even "The Historian of the Roman Empire" affirms, "that the little animal is a beast familiar to man, and signifies love." — Vol. ii. p. 343.

PAGE 50. — *Visnow and Ixhora.*

Two deities of the East Indians, concerning whose history and adventures more nonsense is related than can be found in the whole compass of mythology besides. The traditions of their votaries are, no doubt, allegorical; but without a key to disclose their mystic import, they are little better than senseless jargon.

PAGE 50. — *talapoins.*

This order, which abounds in Siam, Laos, Pegu, and other countries, consists of different classes, and both sexes, but chiefly of men. — *Relig. Ceremon.* vol. iv. p. 62, &c.

PAGE 50. — *objects of pity were sure to swarm round him.*

Ludeke mentions the practice of bringing those who were suffering under any calamity, or had lost the use of their limbs, &c. into public, for the purpose of exciting compassion. On an occasion, therefore, of this sort, when Fakreddin, like a pious Mussulman, was publicly to distribute his alms, and the commander of the faithful to make his appearance, such an assemblage might well be expected. The Eastern custom of regaling a convention of this kind is of great antiquity, as is evident from the parable of the king in the Gospels, who entertained the maimed, the lame, and the blind; nor was it discontinued when Dr. Pocock visited the East.—Vol. i. p. 182.

PAGE 50. — *horns of an exquisite polish.*

Jacinto Polo de Medina, in one of his epigrams, has as unexpected a turn on the same topic: —

> "Cavando un sepulcro un hombre
> Sacò largo, corvo y grueso,
> Entre otros muchos, un hueso,
> Que tiene cuerno por nombre:

Volviòlo al sepulchro al punto:
Y viéndolo un cortesano.
Dijo: bien haceis, hermano,
Que es hueso de ese defunto."

PAGE 51. — *small plates of abominations.*

The Koran hath established several distinctions relative to different kinds of food, in imitation of the Jewish prescriptions; and many Mahometans are so scrupulous as not to touch the flesh of any animal over which, *in articulo mortis*, the butcher had omitted to pronounce the *Bismillah.* — *Relig. Cerem.* vol. vii. p. 110.

PAGE 51. — *fish which they drew from a river.*

According to Le Bruyn, the Oriental method of fishing with a line, is by winding it round the finger, and when the fisherman feels that the bait is taken, he draws in the string with alternate hands: in this way, he adds, a good dish of fish is soon caught. Tom. i. p. 564. It appears, from a circumstance related by Galand, that Vathek was fond of this amusement. — *D'Herbelot, Suppl.* p. 210.

PAGE 51. — *Sinai.*

This mountain is deemed by Mahometans the noblest of all others, and ever regarded with the highest veneration, because the divine law was promulgated from it. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 812.

PAGE 51. — *Peries.*

The word *Peri*, in the Persian language, signifies that beautiful race of creatures which constitutes the link between angels and men. The Arabians call them *Ginn*, or genii, and we (from the Persian, perhaps) *Fairies*: at least, the peries of the Persian romance correspond to that imaginary class of beings in our poetical system. The Italians denominate them *Fata*, in allusion to their power of charming and inchanting; thus the *Manta Fatidica* of Virgil is rendered in Orlando, *La Fato Manto.* The term ginn being common to both peries and dives, some have erroneously fancied that the peries were female dives. This appellation, however, served only to discriminate their common nature from the angelic and human, without respect to their qualities, moral or personal. Thus, the dives are hideous and wicked, whilst the peries are beautiful and good. Amongst the Persian poets, the beauty of the peries is proverbial; insomuch that a woman superlatively handsome, is styled by them, *the offspring of a Peri.*

PAGE 52. — *butterflies of Cachemire.*

The same insects are celebrated in an unpublished poem of Mesihi, another of the MSS. mentioned in the Preface. Sir Anthony Shirley relates, that it was customary in Persia "to hawke after butterflies with sparrows, made to that use, and stares." It is, perhaps, to this amusement that our author alludes in the context.

PAGE 52. — *I had rather that his teeth should mischievously press my finger.*

These *molles morsunculæ* remind one of Lesbia and her sparrow: —

"Passer, deliciæ meæ puellæ,
Quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,
Quoi primum digitum dare adpetenti,
Et acres solet incitare morsus."

In the Story of the Sleeper Awakened (which the induction to the Taming of the Shrew greatly resembles), Abou Hassan thus addresses the lady that was brought him: — "Come hither, fair one, and bite the end of my finger*, that I may feel whether I am asleep or awake."— *Arab. Nights*, vol. iii. p. 137. — Lady Percy, with all the fondness of insinuation, practises on her wayward Hotspur a blandishment similar to that here instanced by Nouronihar: —

"Come, come, you paraquito, answer me
Directly to this question that I ask.
In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true."

PAGE 53. — *Megnoun and Leilah.*

These personages are esteemed amongst the Arabians as the most beautiful, chaste, and impassioned of lovers; and their amours have been celebrated with all the charms of verse, in every Oriental language. The Mahometans regard them, and the poetical records of their love, in the same light as the Bridegroom and Spouse, and the Song of Songs, are regarded by the Jews. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 573.

PAGE 53. — *They still detained him in the harem.*

Noureddin, who was as old as Gulchenrouz, had a similar indulgence of resorting to the harem, and no less availed himself of it. — *Arab. Nights*, vol. iii. pp. 9, 10.

PAGE 53. — *dart the lance in the chase.*

Throwing the lance was a favourite pastime with the young Arabians; and so expert were they in this practice (which prepared them for the mightier conflicts, both of the chase and of war), that they could bear off a ring on the points of their javelins. — *Richardson's Dissertat.* pp. 198, 281. Though the ancients had various methods of hunting, yet the two which chiefly prevailed were those described by Virgil †, and alluded to by Solomon. ‡ — *Prov.* vii. 22.

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* Αλλ' επι λεκ]ρον ιων, ακρον δακ]υλον κα]δακνω.

Homer. Batrach. v. 45.

† Dum trepidant ALÆ, saltusque indagine cingunt.

Æn. iv. 121.

Notwithstanding the explanations of alæ, which have been given by Servius, Burman, and others, there can scarce be a doubt, but that Virgil referred to the custom of scaring deer into holts, with feathers fastened on lines: a practice so effectual to the purpose, that Linnæus characterised the Dama, or Fallow Deer, from it: — *arcetur filo horizontali.* The same stratagem is mentioned in the Georgics (iii. 371.)

Puniceæve agitant pavidos formidine Pinnæ:

and again, in the Æneid (xii. 749.)

Inclusum veluti si quando flumine nactus
Cervum, aut Puniceæ septum formidine Pinnæ.

It is observable, however, that the poet, in these instances, hath studiously, varied his mode of expression. The sportsmen of Italy used pinion feathers,

PAGE 53.—*nor curb the steeds.*

Though Gulchenrouz was too young to excel in horsemanship, it nevertheless was an essential accomplishment amongst the Arabians. Hence the boast of Amriolkais: —

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which, the better to answer their purpose, they dyed of a Lybian red[a]; but, as Africa abounded in birds whose wings were impregnated with the spontaneous and glossy tincture of nature, such an expedient in that country must have been needless. If we advert, then, to the scene of Dido's chase, the reason will be obvious why Virgil omitted *puniceæ*, and for *pinnæ* substituted *alæ*.

There is a passage in Nemesianus, which will at once confirm the interpretation here given, and illustrate the judgment of the poet in the choice of his terms: —

> "Hinc (sc. ex Africa) mage Puniceas nativo munere sumes:
> Namque illic sine fine, greges florentibus alis
> Invenies avium, suavique rubescere luto."
>
> *Cynegeticon*, v. 317.

‡ The wide region of conjectural emendation cannot produce a happier instance of critical skill than was discovered by that accurate and judicious scholar, the late Dr. Hunt[b]; who when the sense of the passage referred, to, had, for ages, been lost, sagaciously restored it, by curtailing a letter. *Proverbs*, vii. 22.

As an hart (איל for אויל) boundeth into the toils, till a dart strike through his liver: ——

When the game driven together, were either circumvented, as described by Virgil; or ensnared by the foot τοξοσφαξιν as alluded to by Solomon, the hunters despatched them with their missile weapons. Thus Xenophon, (as cited in Dr. Hunt's Dissertation) Χρη δ' ουτως ελη—εαν μεν η αρρην μη προσιεναι εγγυς· της γαρ κεραιας παιει, και τοις ποσιν· απιθιν ουν. ΑΚΟΝΤΙΖΕΙΝ.— "When the animal is thus caught; you must not, if it be a male, advance within his reach, for they are apt to strike with their horns and their heels; it will be proper therefore to *pierce* him at a distance."

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[a] Lybice fucantur sandyce pinnæ.
Gratii Cyneg. v. 86.

[b] The correction with the context is this: —

> 22 He goeth after her straightway,
> As an ox goeth to the slaughter;
> 23. Or as an hart boundeth into the toils,
> Till a dart strike through his liver:
> 24. As a bird hasteth to the snare,
> And knoweth not that it is for his life.

Dr. Jubb well imagined (though he hath ill rendered המהר in the 21st verse, Irretivit illum that the heedless haste of the bird towards the snare, might be caused by the lure of a female's call; and adduced from Oppian, an apposite example:—

> Ὡς δε τις οιωνοισι μορον δολοενʃα φυʃευων
> Θηʃειαν ϑαμνοισι καʃακρυπʃει λασιοισιν
> Ορνιν, ὁμογλωσσοιο συνεμπορον ηϑαδα ϑηρης·
> Ἡ δε λιγα κλαζει ξουϑον μελος, οἱ δ'αιονʃες
> Πανʃες επιστερχουσι, και ες βροκον αυʃον ἱενʃαι
> Θηλυʃερης ενοπῃσι παραπλαγχϑενʃες ιωης.
>
> *Halieut.* iv. 120.

> As when the fowler to the fields resorts,
> His caged domestic partner of his sports
> Behind some shade-projecting bush he lays,
> And wreaths the wiry cell with blooming sprays.
> The pretty captive to the groves around
> Warbles her practised care-deluding sound.
> The attentive flocks pursue with ravish'd ear
> The female music of the feather'd fair,
> Forget to see, and rush upon the snare. JONES.

"Often have I risen at early dawn, while the birds were yet in their nests, and mounted a hunter with smooth short hair, of a full height; and so fleet as to make captive the beasts of the forests.

"Ready in turning, quick in pursuing, bold in advancing, firm in backing; and performing the whole with the strength and swiftness of a vast rock which a torrent has pushed from its lofty base.

"A bright bay steed, from whose polished back the trappings slide, as drops of rain slide hastily down the slippery marble.

* * * * *

"He makes the light youth slide from his seat, and violently shakes the skirts of a heavier and more stubborn rider."—*Moallakat*, p. 10.

The stud of Fakreddin consisted, no doubt, of as noble a breed; though sprung neither from "the mighty Tartar horse," (whose gigantic rider was slain by Codadad), nor the size of Clavileño, "and the wondrous horse of brass" Milton's allusion to the *last* having occasioned much fruitless enquiry concerning his pedigree*, it shall here be made out, with that of his brother:—

The principal qualities of "the Horse of Brass" were, that he was brought before the Tartar king, after the third course of a feast, which was solemnised at the commencement of spring: that he was able, within the compass of a natural day, to carry his rider wherever he might choose; that he could mount into the air, as high as an eagle, and with as equable and easy a motion; that by turning one pin, fixed in his ear, his course might be directed to a destined spot, and, by means of another, he might be made to alight, or return to the place from whence he set out.

The particulars of Clavileño are, that he was the production of an enchanter; was capable of rising into the air with the velocity of an arrow, and carrying his rider to any distance; was put into motion by the turning of a pin on his neck; and directed in his course by another in his forehead: that he fleeted so steadily through the air as not to spill a drop from a cup full of water in the hand of his rider; that, being lent by his owner, Pierres made a long voyage upon him, and brought off the fair Magalona, who alighted to become a queen; that Don Quixote, when high in the air, knew not the management of the pin, to prevent his rising; and that he, at last, vanished amidst rockets and crackers.

The resemblances here specified are evidently too strong to have resulted from accident; and it will appear, on further enquiry, that "the Enchanted Horse," in the Arabian Nights, was not only possessed of those qualities which were common to them both, but also of such as were peculiar to each. Thus,

He was presented to the king of Persia at the close of a festival, which was celebrated on the opening of spring: could transport his rider, and in the space of a day, wherever he listed; moved so smoothly as to cause no shock, even on coming on the ground; could soar above the ken of every beholder;

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* "Among the MSS. at Oriel College in Oxford, is an old Latin treatise, entitled Fabula de æneo caballo. Here I imagined I had discovered the origin of Chaucer's Squier's Tale, so replete with marvellous imagery, and evidently an Arabian fiction of the middle ages. But I was disappointed; for, on examination, it appeared to have not even a distant connection with Chaucer's story. I mention this, that others, on seeing such a title in the catalogue, might not be flattered with specious expectations of so curious a discovery, and misled, like myself, by a fruitless enquiry." *Warton's edit. of Milton's Poems*, p. 82.

might be guided, by turning a pin in the hollow of his neck, to any point his rider should choose; and by means of another behind his right ear, be made to descend, or return whence he came; was the production of an enchanter; passed through the air with the speed of an arrow; having been lent by his owner to Firouz Schah, carried him a considerable distance, and brought back behind him the Princess of Bengal, to whom the prince was afterwards married; that Firouz Schah, when high in the air, was unable to manage the pin, so as to prevent him from rising; and, finally, that he made his last exit in an explosion of fire-works and smoke.*

PAGE 53. — *the bow, however, he drew with a certain aim.*

This, as well as the other accomplishments mentioned before, was a constituent part of an Eastern education. Thus, in the Story of the Sisters, who envied their Sister: — "When the princes were learning to mount the managed horse and to ride, the princess could not permit them to have that advantage over her, but went through all their exercises with them, learning to ride the great horse, dart the javelin, and bend the bow." — *Arab. Nights*, vol. iv. p. 276.

PAGE 53 — *The two brothers had mutually engaged their children to each other.*

Contracts of this nature were frequent amongst the Arabians. Another instance occurs in the Story of Noureddin Ali and Bedreddin Hassan.

PAGE 53. — *Nouronihar loved her cousin more than her own beautiful eyes.*

This mode of expression not only occurs in the sacred writers, but also in the Greek and Roman. Thus, Moschus:

Τοι μεν εγω ΤΙΕΚΣΟΝ ΙΣΟΝ ΦΑΕΕΣΣΙΝ ΕΜΟΙΣΙΝ.

and Catullus says: —

"Quem plus illa oculis suis amabat."

PAGE 54. — *the same long, languishing looks.*

So Ariosto: —

"——— negri occhi, ———
Pietosi a riguardare, a mover parchi.

The lines which follow, from Shakspeare and Spenser, may serve as a comment upon the brief but beautiful description of our Author.

Winter's Tale: —

"——— never gaz'd the moon
Upon the water as he 'll stand, and read,
As 't were, my daughter's eyes."

Faerie Queen†: —

"——— Her eyes, sweet smiling in delight,
Moystened their fierie beames, with which she thrild

* It may not be impertinent to subjoin, on a kindred subject, as no mention has been hitherto made of him, that the author of "the Touchstone, or paradoxes brought to the test of a rigorous and fair examination, printed for Noon, 1732," appears to have been the original projector of sailing through the air, in a boat appended to a ball.

† Spenser seems to have copied this simile from Tasso; —

Qual raggio in onda, le scintilla un riso
Negli umidi occhi tremulo e lascivo.

Fraile hearts, yet quenched not; like starry light,
Which sparkling on the silent waves does seeme more bright."

PAGE 54. — *with all the bashfulness of a fawn.*

The fawn, as better known, is here substituted for the gazal of the Arabians an animal uncommonly beautiful and shy.

PAGE 54. — *take refuge in the fond arms of Nouronihar.*

Ample scope is here left to the imagination of the reader, and Tasso will assist him to fill up the picture.

"Sovra lui pende: ed ei nel grembo molle
Le posa il capo, e' l volto al volto attolle."—*La Gerus.* xvi. 18.

PAGE 54. — *Shaddukian and Ambreabad.*

These were two cities of the peries, in the imaginary region of *Gunnistan* the former signifies *pleasure* and *desire*, the latter, *the city of Ambergris* — See *Richardson's Dissertat.* p. 169.

PAGE 56. — *a spoon of cocknos.*

The cocknos is a bird whose beak is much esteemed for its beautiful polish, and sometimes used as a spoon. Thus, in the History of Atalmulek and Zelica Begum, it was employed for a similar purpose: — "Zelica having called for refreshment, six old slaves instantly brought in and distributed *Mabramas*, and then served about in a great basin of Martabam, a salad *made of herbs of various kinds, citron juice, and the pith of cucumbers.* They served it first to the Princess in a *cocknos beak*: she took a beak of the salad, eat it, and gave another to the next slave that sat by her on her right hand; which slave did as her mistress had done."

PAGE 57. — *Goules.*

Goul, or *ghul*, in Arabic, signifies any terrifying object, which deprives people of the use of their senses. Hence it became the appellative of that species of monster which was supposed to haunt forests, cemeteries, and other lonely places; and believed not only to tear in pieces the living, but to dig up and devour the dead. — *Richardson's Dissert.* pp. 174. 274.

That kind of insanity called by the Arabians *Kutrub* (a word signifying not only a *wolf*, but likewise a *male Goul*), which incites such as are afflicted with it to roam howling amidst those melancholy haunts, may cast some light on the nature of the possession recorded by St. Mark, ch. v. 1, &c.

PAGE 58. — *feathers of the heron, all sparkling with carbuncles.*

Panaches of this kind are amongst the attributes of Eastern royalty. — *Tales of Inatulla*, vol. ii. p. 205.

PAGE 58. — *whose eyes pervade the inmost soul of a female.*

The original in this instance, as in the others already noticed, is more analogous to the French than the English idiom: — "*Dont l'œil pénètre jusqu'à la moelle des jeunes filles.*"

PAGE 58. — *the carbuncle of Giamschid.*

This mighty potentate was the fourth sovereign of the dynasty of the Pisendians, and brother or nephew to Tahamurath. His proper name was *Giamsch*

Gem, and *Schid*, which in the language of the ancient Persians denominated the sun: an addition ascribed by some to the majesty of his person, and by others to the splendour of his actions. One of the most magnificent monuments of his reign was the city of Istakhar, of which Tahamurath had laid the foundations. This city, at present called *Gihil-*, or *Tchil-minar*, from the forty columns reared in it by Homai, or according to our author and others *) by Soliman Ben Daoud, was known to the Greeks by the name of Persepolis; and there is still extant in the East a tradition, that, when Alexander burnt the edifices of the Persian kings, seven stupendous structures of Giamschid were consumed with his palace. This prince, after having subjected to his empire seven vast provinces of Upper Asia, and enjoyed in peace a long reign (which some authors have protracted to 700 years), became intoxicated with his greatness; and, foolishly fancying it would have no end, arrogated to himself divine honours. But the Almighty raised up, even in his own house, a terrible instrument to abase his pride, by whom he was easily overcome, and driven into exile.

The author of Giame al tavatikh mentions the cup, or concave mirror of Giamschid, formed of a gem, and called the cup of the sun. To this vessel the Persian poets often refer, and allegorise it in different ways. They attribute to it the property of exhibiting every thing in the compass of nature, and even some things that are preternatural. The gem it consisted of appears to be the carbuncle, or oriental ruby; which, from its resemblance to a burning coal, and the splendour it was supposed to emit in the dark, was called Schebgerag, or, the torch of the night. According to Strabo, it obtained its high estimation amongst the Persians, who were worshippers of fire, from its igneous qualities; and perhaps those virtues for which it hath been styled "the first of stones."

Milton had a learned retrospect to its fabulous powers, in describing the Old Serpent: —

——— his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes —

Herbelot, p. 392. 395. 780. &c. *Brighte on Melancholie*, p. 321. *Paradise Lost*, IX. 499.

PAGE 58. — *the torches were extinguished.*

From the emblems of royalty in the vision, and the closing declaration of the last voice, it is evident that these torches, λαμπαδας ΑΝΤΙ ΤΩΝ ΝΥΜΦΙΚΩΝ του ΔΑΙΜΟΝΟΣ ἀψαῖος, were lighted by the dive to prognosticate † the destined union of which the water in the bath was a further omen. Thus Lactantius: — "A veteribus institutum est, ut sacramento ignis et aquæ nuptiarum fœdera sanciantur, quod fœtus animantium calore et humore corporentur atque animentur ad vitam. Unde aqua et igne uxorem accipere dicitur."— *Ovid. Fast.* iv. 792. *Var. de Ling. Lat.* iv. 10. *Serv. ad Virg. Æn.* iv. 167.

Of the union here prefigured, the sequel will allow to be added.

Non *Hymenæus* adest illi, non gratia lecto;
Eumenides tenuere faces, de funere raptas:
Eumenides stravere torum.‡

PAGE 58. — *She clapped her hands.*

This was the ordinary method in the East of calling the attendants in waiting. — See *Arabian Nights*, vol. i. pp. 5. 106. 193, &c.

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* Examen Critique des Anciens Historiens d'Alexandre le Grand, p. 287.

† Mihi deductæ fax omen prætulit.
Propert. IV. iii. 13.

‡ See the History of Vathek, p. 148. 165.

PAGE 59.— *have you false keys? Come, to the dark chamber.*

It was the office of Shaban, as chief eunuch, to keep the key of the ladies' apartment. In the story of Ganem, Haroun al Raschid commands Mefrour, the chief of the eunuchs, "to take the perfidious Fetnah, and shut her up in the dark tower." That tower was within the inclosure of the palace, and commonly served as a prison for the favourites who might chance to disgust the caliph.

PAGE 59.— *set him upon his shoulders.*

The same mode of carrying boys is noted by Sandys; and Ludeke has a passage still more to the purpose: — "Liberos dominorum suorum *grandiusculos ita humeris portant* servi, ut illi lacertis suis horum collum, pedibus vero latera amplectantur, sicque illorum facies super horum caput emineat."— *Expositio Brevis*, p. 37.

PAGE 59.— *his cheeks became the colour of the blossom of pomegranates.*

The modest blush of an ingenuous youth (which a Grecian lady of admired taste averred to be the finest colour in nature), is denominated by the Arabians from this very flower. Solomon, in his exquisite Idyllium, hath adopted the same comparison. Ch. IV. v. 3.

"כפלח הרמון רקתך. Thy cheeks are like the opening bloom* of the pomegranate."

But a more apposite use of this similitude occurs in an ode by a poet of Damascus: —

"The blossom of the pomegranate brings back to my mind the blushes of my beloved, when her cheeks are coloured with a modest resentment."

PAGE 60.— *their faith is mutually plighted.*

When females in the East are betrothed, their palms and fingers are tinged of a crimson colour, with the herb hinnah. This is called "the crimson of consent."— *Tales of Inatulla*, vol. ii. p. 15.

PAGE 60.— *violate the rights of hospitality.*

So high an idea of these rights prevails amongst the Arabians, that "a bread and salt traitor," is the most opprobrious invective with which one person can reproach another — *Richardson's Dissert.* p. 219. See also the story of *Ali Baba* and *The Forty Thieves*, in the *Arabian Nights*, vol. iv. p. 166.

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* Simon interprets פרח by *eruptio floris*, & Guarini by *balaustium*, senses, which the following passage from Pliny will support: — Primus pomi hujus partus flore incipentis, *Cytinus* vocatur Græcis. In hoc ipso cytino flosculi sunt, antequam scilicet malum ipsum prodeat, erumpentes, quos balaustium vocari diximus. Nat. Hist. Lib XXIII. 59, 60. [According to Dioscorides, I. 132, the balaustium was the blossom of the wild, and the citynus of the cultivated, pomegranate.]

Dr. Durell, justly dissatisfied with the versions before him, hath rendered the hemistich thus: "Thy cheeks are like a piece of pomegranate;" and adds, "The cheeks are compared to a piece of this fruit, because the pomegranate, when whole, is of a dull colour; but when cut up of a lively beautiful vermilion."—But, if this interpretation and reasoning be allowed, Solomon was less pat at a simile than Sancho: for, whether the cheeks of a blooming bride—or the inwards of a man, "just cleft from noddle down to neck,"—be more like a split pomegranate? "let the forest judge." Durell's Critical Remarks, p. 293. Don Quixote, tom iii. p. 282.

PAGE 61.— *narcotic powder.*

A drug of the same quality, mixed in lemonade, is given to Zobeide, in the story of Ganem.

PAGE 62. — *Funeral vestments were prepared; their bodies washed, &c.*

The rites here practised had obtained from the earliest ages. Most of them may be found in Homer and the other poets of Greece. Lucian describes the dead in his time as washed, perfumed, vested, and crowned, ὡρείοις ἀνθεσιν, with the flowers most in season; or, according to other writers, those in particular which the deceased were wont to prefer. The elegant editor of the Ruins of Palmyra mentions the fragments of a mummy found there, the hair of which was plaited exactly in the manner as worn at present by the women of Arabia.

The burial dress from the days of Homer hath been commonly white, and amongst Mahometans is made without a seam, that it may not impede the ceremonial of kneeling in the grave, when the dead person undergoes examination. — *Homer, Euripides, &c.* passim. *Lucian*, tom. ii. p. 927. *Paschal de Coron.* p. 225. *Ruins of Palmyra*, p. 22, 23. *Iliad σ*, 352. *Relig. Cerem.* vol. vii. p. 117.

PAGE 63. — *all instruments of music were broken.*

Thus, in the Arabian Nights: "Haroun al Raschid wept over Schemselnihar, and, before he left the room, ordered all the musical instruments to be broken." — Vol. ii. p. 196.

PAGE 63. — *imans began to recite their prayers.*

An iman is the principal priest of a mosque. It was the office of the imans to precede the bier, praying as the procession moved on. — *Relig. Cerem* vol. vii. p. 117.

PAGE 63.— *The wailful cries of La Ilah illa Alla!*

This exclamation, which contains the leading principle of Mahometan belief, and signifies *there is no God but God*, was commonly uttered under some violent emotion of mind. The Spaniards adopted it from their Moorish neighbours, and Cervantes hath used it in Don Quixote: — "En esto Ilegáron corriendo con grita, LILILIIS (literally *professions of faith in Alla*), y algazara los de las libreas, adonde Don Quixote suspenso y atónito estava.— *Parte Segunda*, cap. lxi. tom. iv. p. 241.

The same expression is sometimes written by the Spaniards, *Lilaila*, and *Hila hilahaila.*

PAGE 65. — *the angel of death had opened the portal of some other world.*

The name of this exterminating angel is *Azrael*, and his office is to conduct the dead to the abode assigned them; which is said by some to be near the place of their interment. Such was the office of Mercury in the Grecian Mythology. — *Sale's Prelim. Disc.* p. 101. *Hyde in notis ad Bobov.* p. 19. *R. Elias, in Tishbi. Buxtorf Synag. Jud. et Lexic. Talmud. Homer. Odyss.*

PAGE 65. — *Monker and Nakir.*

These are two black angels of a tremendous appearance, who examine the departed on the subject of his faith: by whom, if he give not a satisfactory account, he is sure to be cudgelled with maces of red-hot iron, and tormented

more variously than words can describe. — *Relig. Ceremon.* vol. vii. pp. 59. 68. 118. vol. v. p. 290. *Sale's Prelim. Disc.* p. 101., and one of the MSS. specified in the Preface.

PAGE 65. — *the fatal bridge.*

This bridge, called in Arabic *al Sirat*, and said to extend over the internal gulf, is represented as narrower than a spider's web, and sharper than the edge of a sword. Though the attempt to cross it be —

> " More full of peril, and advent'rous spirit,
> Than to o'erwalk a current, roaring loud,
> On the unsteadfast footing of a spear ;"

yet the paradise of Mahomet can be entered by no other avenue. Those, indeed, who have behaved well need not be alarmed ; mixed characters will find it difficult ; but the wicked soon miss their standing, and plunge headlong into the abyss. — *Pocock in Port. Mos.* p. 282, &c. Milton apparently copied from this well-known fiction, and not, as Dr. Warton conjectured, from the poet Sadi ; his way —

> " Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
> Tamely endured a bridge of wond'rous length,
> From hell continued, reaching the utmost orb
> Of this frail world."

PAGE 65. — *a certain series of years.*

According to the tradition from the prophet, not less than nine hundred, nor more than seven thousand.

PAGE 65. — *the sacred camel.*

It was an article of the Mahometan creed, that all animals would be raised again, and some of them admitted into paradise. The animal here mentioned appears to have been one of those *white-winged* CAMELS * *caparisoned with gold*, which Ali affirmed had been provided to convey the faithful. — *Relig. Cer.* vol. vii. p. 70. *Sale's Prelim. Disc.* p. 112. *Al Jauheri. Ebno'l Athir*, &c.

PAGE 66. — *basket-making.*

This sort of basket work hath been long used in the East, and consists of the leaves of the date-bearing palm. Panniers of this texture are of great utility in conveying fruits, bread, &c., whilst heavier articles, or such as require a more compact covering, are carried in bags of leather, or skin. — *Hasselquist's Voyage*, p. 261.

PAGE 66. — *the caliph presented himself to the emir in a new light.*

The propensity of a vicious person, in affliction, to seek consolation from the ceremonies of religion, is an exquisite trait in the character of Vathek.

PAGE 71. — *the waving of fans.*

These fans consisted of the trains of peacocks or ostriches, whose quills were set in a long stem, so as to imbricate the plumes in the gradations of their

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* Tarafa, amongst other circumstances in the description of his camel, notices her " bushy tail, which appears as if the two wings of a large white eagle were transfixed by an awl to the bone, and hung waving round both her sides " Moallakat, p. 19.

natural growth. Fans of this fashion were formerly used in England. That, here subjoined, from a portrait of Elizabeth, was probably the same noticed by Mr. Warton in the Sidney papers, as "presented to her for a new year's gift, the handle of which was studded with diamonds."

To judge from the language of Burton ("if he get any remnant of hers, a buske-point, a feather of her fanne, a shoo-tye, a lace,") these fans soon after became common.* It was, however, to this kind that Milton alluded in a

passage of Paradise Lost, the collocation of which, though disjointed through the mistake of his amanuensis, may, by transposing a word, be restored: —

"—— his sleep
Was aery light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which th' only sound
Of fuming rills, and leaves, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song,
Of birds on ev'ry bough."

* Some of them are here copied, of different forms.

Trees, whose branches are well covered with leaves, may be not improperly styled feathering*, and, in the language of Milton, form the fan of Aurora, which, when waved by the breeze of the morning, occasions the rustling that constitutes a third in the complex sound referred to.

PAGE 72. — *wine hoarded up in bottles, prior to the birth of Mahomet.*

The prohibition of wine by the prophet materially diminished its consumption within the limits of his own dominions. Hence a reserve of it might be expected of the age here specified. The custom of hoarding wine was not unknown to the Persians, though not so often practised by them as by the Greeks and the Romans.

" I purchase " (says Lebeid) " the old liquor, at a dear rate, in dark leathern bottles, long reposited ; or in casks black with pitch, whose seals I break, and then fill the cheerful goblet." *Moallakat*, p. 53.

PAGE 72. — *excavated ovens in the rock.*

As substitutes for the portable ovens, which were lost.

PAGE 72. — *manchets prepared by Nouronihar.*

Herodotus mentions a lady of equal rank, performing a similar office : — ἡ δε ΓΥΝΗ του ΒΑΣΙΛΗΟΣ αὖτη τα ΣΙΤΙΑ σφι ἐπιδοσι† : and the cakes which Tamar made for Amnon are well known.

PAGE 73. — *her great camel Alboufaki.*

There is a singular and laboured description of a camel in the poem of Tarafa ; but Alboufaki possessed qualities appropriate to himself, and which rendered him but little less conspicuous than the deformed dun camel of Aad.

PAGE 74. — *to set forward, notwithstanding it was noon.*

The employment of wood-fellers was accounted of all others the most toilsome, as those occupied in it were compelled to forego that mid-day cessation with which other labourers were indulged. Inatulla speaks proverbially of " woodmen in the meridian hour, scarce able to raise the arms of languor." The guides of Carathis being of this occupation, she adroitly availed herself of it to urge them forward, without allowing them that repose during the mid-day fervour which travellers in these climates always enjoyed‡, and which was deemed so essential to the preservation of their health.

PAGE 74. — *the confines of some cemetery.*

Places of interment in the East were commonly situated in scenes of solitude. We read of one in the History of the First Calender, abounding with so many

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* Thus, Mr. Whateley, the first authority in the language of picturesque description : — " Large boughs, feathering down, often intercept the sight."

† Lib. VIII. p. 685. That σιτια is to be understood in the sense above given, is certain from what immediately follows

‡ Psalm xci. 5. The explanatory iteration of the subsequent verse, points out a congruity between the Hebrew poet and Homer. As the contagion amongst the Greeks produced by the excessive heat of the sun, was assigned in the Iliad to the arrows of the God of light ; so, the destruction that wasteth at noon, is attributed in the Psalm to the arrow that flieth by day.—It has been observed by a nobleman of many accomplishments, that this verse should be added to the other passages of scripture, which have been noted in the writings ascribed to Zoroaster.

monuments, that four days were successively spent in it without the enquirer being able to find the tomb he looked for; and, from the Story of Ganem, it appears that the doors of these cemeteries were often left open. *Arabian Nights*, vol. ii. p. 112. vol. iii. p. 135.

PAGE 77. — *a Myrabolan comfit.*

The invention of this confection is attributed by M Cardonne to Avicenna, but there is abundant reason, exclusive of our author's authority, to suppose it of a much earlier origin. Both the Latins and Greeks were acquainted with the balsam, and the tree that produced it was indigenous in various parts of Arabia.

PAGE 78. — *blue fishes.*

Fishes of the same colour are mentioned in the Arabian Nights: and, like these, were endowed with the gift of speech.

PAGE 79. — *nests still higher than the clouds.*

The metaphor of a nest for a secure habitation, occurs in the sacred writings. Thus Habakkuk: — "Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil." And Obadiah: — "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars," &c. The genius here mentioned seems to have been adopted from the Jewish notion of Guardian Angels, to whom the superintendence of children is supposed to be committed, and to which our Saviour himself hath referred (Matt. xviii. 10.); whilst the original possessors of the nest may be presumed to have been some of those marvellous birds so frequently mentioned in Eastern romance.

PAGE 79. — *waving streamers on which were inscribed the names of Allah and the Prophet.*

The position that "there is no God but God, and Mahomet is his Prophet," pervades every part of the Mahometan religion. Banners, like those here described, are preserved in the several mosques; and, on the death of extraordinary persons, are borne before the bier in solemn state. — *Relig. Ceremon.* vol. vii. pp. 119, 120.

PAGE 80. — *astrolabes.*

The mention of the astrolabe may be deemed incompatible, at first view, with chronological exactness, as there is no instance of any being constructed by a Mussulman, till after the time of Vathek. It may, however, be remarked, to go no higher, that Sinesius, bishop of Ptolemais, invented one in the fifth century; and that Carathis was not only herself a Greek, but also cultivated those sciences which the good Mussulmans of her time all held in abhorrence. *Bailly, Hist. de l'Astronom. Moderne*, tom. i. pp. 563. 573.

PAGE 82. — *On the banks of the stream, hives and oratories.*

The bee is an insect held in high veneration amongst the Mahometans, it being pointed out in the Koran, "for a sign unto the people that understand." It has been said, in the same sense, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." *Prov.* vi. 6. The santons, therefore, who inhabit the fertile banks of Rocnabad, are not less famous for their hives than their oratories. *D'Herbelot*, p. 717.

PAGE 82. — *harbingers of the imperial procession began to proclaim.*

This circumstance of sending heralds to announce the approach of a sovereign, reminds us of "the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

PAGE 83. — *sheiks, — cadis.*

Sheiks are the chiefs of the societies of derviches; cadis are the magistrates of a town or city.

PAGE 83. — *Asses in bridles of riband inscribed from the Koran.*

As the judges of Israel in ancient days rode on white asses, so, amongst the Mahometans, those that affect an extraordinary sanctity, use the same animal in preference to the horse. Sir John Chardin observed, in various parts of the East, that their reins, as here represented, were of silk, with the name of God, or other inscriptions, upon them. —*Ludeke, Expos. brevis*, p. 49. *Chardin's MS.* cited by Harmer.

PAGE 84. — *One of these beneficent Genii, assuming the exterior of a shepherd, &c. began to pour from his flute, &c.*

The flute was considered as a sacred instrument, which Jacob and other holy shepherds had sanctified by using.— *Relig. Cerem.* vol. vii. p. 110.

PAGE 84.—*involuntarily drawn towards the declivity of the hill.*

A similar instance of attraction may be seen in the Story of Prince Ahmed and the Peri Parabanon.— *Arabian Nights*, vol. iv. p. 243.

PAGE 85. — *Eblis.*

D'Herbelot supposes this title to have been a corruption of the Greek Διάβολος, *diabolos.* It was the appellation conferred by the Arabians upon the prince of the apostate angels, whom they represent as exiled to the infernal regions, for refusing to worship Adam at the command of the Supreme, and appears more likely to originate from the Hebrew הבל, *hebel*, vanity, pride — See *below, the note p.* 90., "*creatures of clay.*"

PAGE 85. — *compensate for thy impieties by an exemplary life.*

It is an established article of the Mussulman creed, that the actions of mankind are all weighed in a vast unerring balance, and the future condition of the agents determined according to the preponderance of evil or good. This fiction, which seems to have been borrowed from the Jews, had probably its origin in the figurative language of Scripture. Thus, Psalm lxii. 9.—"Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity;" — and, in Daniel, the sentence against the King of Babylon, inscribed on the wall, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting."

PAGE 86. — *Balkis.*

This was the Arabian name of the Queen of Sheba, who went from the south to hear the wisdom and admire the glory of Solomon. The Koran represents her as a worshipper of fire. Solomon is said not only to have entertained her with the greatest magnificence, but also to have raised her to his bed and his throne. — *Al Koran*, ch. xxvii. and *Sale's notes. D'Herbelot*, p. 182.

PAGE 87. — *of an architecture unknown in the records of the earth — an immense palace, whose walls were embossed with various figures, &c.*

Thus Pellegrino Gaudenzi, in his description of the palace of sin : —

" Enorme pondo al suolo, immensa mole
D' aspri macigni intesta e negri marmi
Per cui serpeggian di sanguigna tinta
Lugubri vene : l'atterito sguardo
Muto s'erresta sull' altera fronte
Ch' entro le nubi si sospinge, e s' alza
Superbamente a minacciar le stelle.
Sotto grand' archi su marmoree basi
Fan di sè mostra simulacri orrendi
Che in saccia ad essa i Demon fabbri alzaro."

La Nascita di Cristo, c. i.

PAGE 87 — *The chief of the eunuchs trembling with fear, besought Vathek that a fire might be kindled.*

Η τοῦ ΠΑΧΝΟΥΤΑΙ, the very heart of Bababalouk is congealed with apprehension. Where can a more exquisite trait, both of nature and character, be found, than this request of the eunuch presents?

PAGE 88. — *they seemed not walking, but falling.*

A similar kind of progression is described by Milton : —

" ——— by the hand he took me raised ;
And over fields and waters, as in air,
Smooth sliding without step last led me.

PAGE 89. — *The pavement, strewed over with saffron.*

There are several circumstances in the Story of the Third Calender, that resemble those here mentioned ; particularly a pavement strewed with saffron, and the burning of ambergris and aloes-wood.

PAGE 89. — *A throng of genii and other fantastic spirits, danced, &c.*

A dance of the same kind, and by similar performers, occurs in the History of Ahmed and the Peri Parabanon.

PAGE 90. — *let us haste, and present you to Eblis.*

If our author's description of the arch-apostate be examined by the criterion of Arabian faith, and in reference to the circumstances of the story, there can be no difficulty in appreciating its merit. Gaudenzi, in the poem already cited, hath described the appearance of Satan previous to the birth of Christ in a manner that deserves to be noticed, though the poem itself were less scarce : —

" Fra questo orror da sue radici scosso
Trema repente il suolo, e all' Oriente
Ardua montagna con rimbombo estremo
S' apre per mezzo : immensa foce oscura
Mugghia dal fondo, e fumo, e fiamme, e lampi
Sboccano a un tratto ; i sfracellati massi
Rotando ardenti nel sulfureo flutto
Stampan la piaggia di profonda traccia.
Dai neri gorghi del dolente regno

Con furibondo orribile muggito
Rimonta per l'aperta ampia vorago
L' Angiol d' abisso a funestar la terra.
Come dell' ocean sola tiranna
Sconcia Balena per gli ondosi campi
Move animosa, e coll' enorme petto
L' ampia spezzando rimugghiante massa
Alzasi al giorno, e nel turbato fondo
Il muto armento di sua mole adombra
Tale Satan per vasto mar di fiamme
Ergesi a nuoto : immense ali protese
Alto flagellan con sonoro scroscio
L' onda infernal, che in rosseggianti righe
Sbalza stridente, e il ciel veste di foco.
Sotto grand' archi di vellute ciglia,
Quasi comete sanguinose erranti
Per tenebrose vie, di rabbia pregni
Volvonsi gli occhi, e in cavernoso speco
Orrida s' apre l' infiammata bocca
Aure spirante di veleno infette. *
Egli s' avanza, e il suol guatando e il cielo,
Impaziente con le negre braccia
Le rupi affera, e d' un immenso slancio
Balza al confin della frapposta arena
Mille del suo furor seguaci Spiriti
Ch' erangli sotto per gl' igniti gorghi
Sfilangi dietro, e coll' intento sguardo
In lui rivolti gli si fanno al fianco.
In sua possanza alteramente fiera
Stassi l' oste d'Averno, e adombra il piano,
Siccome mille e mille annose quercie
Che a' piè d' un' alta ferruginea rupe
Aride e negre al cielo ergon le teste.
S' addopian l' ombre della notte, e sola
Al folgorar degl' infernali sguardi
Arde da lungi la solinga piaggia,
Come spezzata da funeste vampe
Massa di nembi."

PAGE 90. — *Ouranbad.*

This monster is represented as a fierce flying hydra, and belongs to the same class with the *rakshe*, whose ordinary food was serpents and dragons; the *soham*, which had the head of a horse, with four eyes, and the body of a flame-coloured dragon, the *syl*, a basilisk with a face resembling the human, but so tremen-

* Several expressions in this passage appear to have been imitated from the following, of Tasso : —

Orrida maestà nel fero aspetto
Terrore accresce, e più superbo il rende :
Rossegian gli occhj, e di veneno infetto,
Come infausta cometa, il guardo splende :
Gl' involve il mento, e su l' irsuto petto
Ispida e folta la gran barba scende :
E in guisa di voragine profonda,
S' apre la bocca d' atro sangue immonda.
La Gerus. c. iv. st. 7.

dous that no mortal could bear to behold it; the *ejder*, and others. See these respective titles in *Richardson's Persian, Arabic, and English Dictionary.*

PAGE 90. — *she expected to have seen some stupendous giant.*

Such is the representation which Dante hath given of this infernal sovereign: —

> " Lo 'mperador del doloroso regno
> Da mezzo 'l petto uscía fuor della ghiaccia:
> E più con un gigante i' mi convegno,
> Che i giganti non fan con le sue braccia."

It is more than probable (though it has not been noticed), that Don Quixote's mistake of the windmills for giants was suggested to Cervantes by the following simile, in which the tremendous personage above-mentioned is so compared: —

> " ——————— però dinanzi mira
> Disse 'l maestro mio, se tu 'l discerni.
> Come quando una grossa nebbia spira,
> O quando l' emisperio nostro annotta
> Par da lungi un mulin che 'l vento gira,
> Vender mi parve un tal dificio allotta."

What confirms this conjecture is the reply to Sancho's question — " What Giants?" — made by Don Quixote, in reference to the two last lines of the preceding citation: —

> " And nearer to a giant's is my size
> Than giants are when to his arms compar'd."

— " Those thou seest yonder, with their vast arms; and some of them there are, that reach nearly two leagues." — *Don Quixote*, parte prim. capit. viii. p. 52. *Dante dell' Inferno*, Canto xxxiv. — It may be added, that a rising wind is mentioned in both.

PAGE 90. — *Creatures of clay.*

Nothing could have been more appositely imagined than this compellation. Eblis, according to Arabian mythology, had suffered a degradation from his primeval rank, and was consigned to these regions, for having refused to worship Adam in obedience to the supreme command; alleging, in justification of his refusal, that himself had been formed of ethereal fire, whilst Adam was only a creature of clay. — *Al Koran*, c. lv. &c.

PAGE 91. — *the fortress of Aherman.*

In the mythology of the Easterns, Aherman was accounted *the Demon of Discord.* The ancient Persian romances abound in descriptions of this fortress, in which the inferior demons assemble, to receive the behests of their prince; and from whom they proceed to exercise their malice in every part of the world, *D'Herbelot*, p. 71.

PAGE 91. — *the halls of Argenk.*

The halls of this mighty dive, who reigned in the mountains of Kaf, contained the statues of the seventy-two Solimans, and the portraits of the various creatures subject to them; not one of which bore the slightest similitude to man. Some had many heads, others many arms, and some consisted of many bodies. Their heads were all very extraordinary, some resembling the elephant's, the buffalo's, and the boar's; whilst others were still more monstrous. — *D'Herbelot*, p. 830. Some of the idols worshipped to this day in Hindostan answer to this description.

Ariosto, who owes more to Arabian fable than his commentators have hitherto supposed, seems to have been no stranger to the halls of Argenk, when he described one of the fountains of Merlin : —

Era una delle fonti di Merlino
Delle quattro di Francia da lui fatte ;
D' intorno cinta di bel marmo fino,
Lucido, e terso, e bianco più che latte.
Quivi d' intaglio con lavor divino
Avea Merlino immagini ritratte.
Direste che spiravano, e se prive
Non fossero di voce, ch' eran vive.

Quivi una Bestia uscir della foresta
Parea di crudel vista, odiosa, e brutta,
Che avea le orecchie d' asino, e la testa
Di lupo, e i denti, e per gran fame asciutta ;
Branche avea di leon ; l'altro, che resta,
Tutto era volpe.

PAGE 91. — *holding his right hand, motionless, on his heart.*

Sandys observes that the application of the right hand to the heart is the customary mode of Eastern salutation ; but the perseverance of the votaries of Eblis in this attitude was intended to express their devotion to him both heart and hand.

PAGE 92. — *In my lifetime I filled, &c.*

This recital agrees perfectly with those in the Koran, and other Arabian legends.

PAGE 93. — *an unrelenting fire preys on my heart.*

Hariri, to convey the most forcible idea of extreme anxiety, represents the heart as tormented by fierce burning coals. This form of speech, it is observed, is *proverbial ;* but do we not see whence the proverb arose ? — *Chappelow's Six Assemblies*, p. 106.

PAGE 93. — *in the abode of vengeance and despair.*

Thus, Dante's inscription over the gate of hell : —

" Per me si va nella città dolente :
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore :
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.
Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore :
Fecemi la divina potestate,
La somma sapienza, e 'l primo amore.
Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,
Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro :
Lasciate ogne speranza, voi che 'ntrate.

Canto iii.

" Through me you pass to Mourning's dark domain ;
Through me to scenes where Grief must ever pine ;
Through me, to Misery's devoted train.
Justice and power in my Great Founder join,
And love and wisdom all his fabrics rear ;
Wisdom above control, and love divine !

Before me Nature saw no works appear,
Save works eternal: such was I ordained.
Quit every hope, all ye who enter here."
* * * * *

[How much have the public to regret, after the specimen given, that Mr. Hayley did not complete the Inferno!]

PAGE 95. — *Carathis on the back of an afrit.*

The expedition of the afrit in fetching Carathis is characteristic of this order of dives. We read in the Koran that another of the fraternity offered to bring the Queen of Saba's throne to Solomon before he could rise from his place, ch. xxvii.

PAGE 97. — *glanced off in a rapid whirl that rendered her invisible.*

It was not ill conceived to punish Carathis by a rite, and one of the principal characteristics of that science in which she so much delighted, and which was the primary cause of Vathek's perdition and of her own. The circle, the emblem of eternity, and the symbol of the sun, was held sacred in the most ancient ceremonies of incantations; and the whirling round deemed as a necessary operation in magical mysteries. Was not the name of the greatest enchantress in fabulous antiquity, Circe, derived from Κίρκος, a circle, on account of her magical revolutions, and of the circular appearance and motion of the sun, her father? The fairies and elves used to arrange themselves in a ring on the grass; and even the augur, in the liturgy of the Romans, whirled round to encompass the four cardinal points of the world. It is remarkable, that a derivative of the verb, rendered, *to whirl in a magical manner* (see page 73, which corresponds to the Hebrew סחר, and is interpreted *scindere, secare se in orbem, inde notio circinandi, mox gyrandi, et hinc à motu versatili, fascinavit, incantavit,* signifies, in the Koran, *the glimmering of twilight:* a sense deducible from the shapeless glimpses of objects when hurried round with the velocity here described, and very applicable to the sudden disappearance of Carathis, who, like the stone in a sling, by the progressive and rapid increase of the circular motion, soon ceased to be perceptible. Nothing can impress a greater awe upon the mind than does this passage in the original.

PAGE 97. — *they at once lost the most precious gift of heaven — Hope.*

It is a soothing reflection to the bulk of mankind, that the commonness of any blessing is the true test of its value. Hence, Hope is justly styled "the most precious of the gifts of heaven," because, as Thales long since observed — ὃς αλλο μηδεν, αυτη ταξεστιν — it abides with those who are destitute of every other. Dante's inscription over the gate of hell was written in the same sense, and perhaps in allusion to the saying of the Grecian sage.

Strongly impressed with this idea, and in order to complete his description of the infernal dungeon, Milton says, —

——— where ———
——— hope never comes
That comes to all.

Paradise L. i. 66.

HORACE, EARL OF ORFORD

Born Sept 28, 1717

By Dean from a Miniature on Enamel painted
by Zincke & preserved in the Collection at Strawberry Hill

THE

CASTLE OF OTRANTO:

A GOTHIC STORY.

BY

HORACE WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, 8. NEW BURLINGTON STREET
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):
BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH;
CUMMING, DUBLIN; AND
GALIGNANI, PARIS.
1834.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

HORACE WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD.

BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD DOVER.*

HORACE WALPOLE was the third and youngest son of that eminent minister, Sir Robert Walpole — the glory of the Whigs, the preserver of the throne of these realms to the present Royal Family, and under whose fostering rule and guidance the country flourished in peace for more than twenty years. The elder brothers of Horace were, Robert Lord Walpole, so created in 1723, who succeeded his father in the earldom of Orford in 1745, and died in 1751; and Sir Edward Walpole, Knight of the Bath, whose three natural daughters were, Mrs. Keppel, wife to the Hon. Frederick Keppel, Bishop of Exeter; the Countess of Waldegrave, afterwards Duchess of Gloucester; and the Countess of Dysart. Sir Edward Walpole died in 1784. His sisters were, Catherine, who died of consumption at the age of nineteen; and Mary, married to George Viscount Malpas, afterwards third Earl of Cholmondeley; she died in 1732. The mother of Horace, and of his brothers and sisters here mentioned, was Catherine Shorter, daughter of John Shorter, Esq. of Bybrook, in Kent, and grand-daughter of Sir John Shorter, lord mayor of London in 1688. She died in 1737, and her youngest son, who always professed the greatest veneration for her memory, erected a monument to her in Westminster Abbey, in one

* Abridged from the Memoir, by the noble Lord, prefixed to the recently published "Letters of Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann."

of the side aisles of Henry the Seventh's chapel. Horace Walpole had also a half sister, the natural daughter of his father, by his mistress, Maria Skerrett, whom he afterwards married. She also was named Mary Walpole, and married Colonel Charles Churchill, the natural son of General Churchill; who was himself a natural son of an elder brother of the great Duke of Marlborough.

Horace Walpole was born October 5th, 1717*, and educated at Eton School, and at King's College, Cambridge. Upon leaving the latter place, he set out on his travels on the Continent, in company with Gray the poet, with whom he had formed a friendship at school. They commenced their journey in March, 1739, and continued abroad above two years. Almost the whole of this time was spent in Italy, and nearly a year of it was devoted to Florence; where Walpole was detained by the society of his friends, Mr. Mann, Mr. Chute, and Mr. Whithed. It was in these classic scenes that his love of art and taste for elegant and antiquarian literature became more developed; and that it took such complete possession of him, as to occupy the whole of his long life, diversified only by the occasional amusement of politics, or the distractions of society. Unfortunately, the friendship of Walpole and his travelling companion could not survive two years of constant intercourse. They quarrelled and parted at Reggio, in July, 1741; and afterwards pursued their way homewards by different routes.

Walpole arrived in England in September, 1741, at which time his correspondence with Sir Horace Mann commences. He had been chosen member for Callington, in the parliament which was elected in June of that year; and arrived in the House of Commons just in time to witness the angry discussions which preceded and accompanied the downfall of his father's administration. He plunged

* In Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary it is said that Horace Walpole was born in 1718; and Sir Walter Scott says he was born in 1716-17, which, according to the new style, would mean that he was born in one of the three first months of the year 1717. Both these statements are, however, erroneous, as he himself fixes the day of his birth, in a letter to Mr. Conway, dated October 5th, 1764, where he says, "What signifies what happens when one is seven-and-forty, as I am to-day? They tell me 't is my birthday," &c. — And again, in a letter to the same correspondent, dated October 5th, 1777, he says, "I am threescore to-day."

at once into the excitement of political partisanship, with all the ardour of youth, and all the zeal which his filial affection for his father inspired. His feelings at this period are best explained by a reference to his letters in the following collection. Public business and attendance upon the House of Commons, apart from the interest attached to peculiar questions, he seems never to have liked. He consequently took very little part either in debates or committees. In March, 1742, on a motion being made for an enquiry into the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole for the preceding ten years, he delivered his maiden speech; on which he was complimented by no less a judge of oratory than Pitt. This speech he has preserved in his letter to Sir Horace Mann, of March 24. 1742.* He moved the address in 1751; and in 1756 made a speech on the question of employing Swiss regiments in the colonies. This speech he has also himself preserved in the second volume of his "Mémoires." In 1757, he was active in his endeavours to save the unfortunate Admiral Byng. Of his conduct upon this occasion he has left a detailed account in his "Mémoires." This concludes all that can be collected of his public life, and at the general election of 1768†, he finally retired from Parliament.

From this time Walpole devoted himself more than ever to his literary and antiquarian pursuits; though the interest he still, in society at least, took in politics, is obvious from the frequent reference to the subject in his letters. In the course of his life his political opinions appear to have undergone a great change. In his youth, and indeed till his old age, he was not only a strenuous Whig, but at times almost a republican. How strong his opinions were in this sense may be gathered, both from the frequent confessions of his political faith, which occur in his letters,

* Sir Walter Scott says, that Walpole on one occasion "vindicated the memory of his father with great dignity and eloquence" in the House of Commons; but as I cannot find any trace of a speech of this kind made by him after Sir Robert Walpole's death, I am inclined to think Sir Walter must have made a mistake as to the time of delivery of the speech mentioned in the text.

† Sir Walter Scott is in error when he says that Walpole retired from the House of Commons in 1758, "at the active age of forty-one." This event occurred, as is here stated, in March, 1768, and when Walpole was consequently in his fifty-first year.

and from his reverence for the death-warrant of Charles the First, of which he hung up the engraving in his bedroom, and wrote upon it with his own hand the words "*Major Charta.*" The horrors of the French Revolution drove him, in the latter period of his life, into other views of politics; and he seems to have become, in theory at least, a Tory, though he probably would have indignantly repudiated the appellation, had it been applied to him.

One of the most favourite pursuits of Walpole was the building and decoration of his Gothic villa of Strawberry Hill. It is situated at the end of the village of Twickenham, towards Teddington, on a slope, which gives it a fine view of a reach of the Thames, and the opposite wooded hill of Richmond Park. He bought it in 1747, of Mrs. Chenevix, the proprietress of a celebrated toy-shop. He thus describes it in a letter of that year to Mr. Conway: — "You perceive by my date that I am got into a new camp, and have left my tub at Windsor. It is a little plaything-house that I got out of Mrs. Chenevix's shop, and is the prettiest bauble you ever saw. It is set in enamelled meadows, with filigree hedges: —

> 'A small Euphrates through the piece is roll'd,
> And little finches wave their wings of gold.'

Two delightful roads, that you would call dusty, supply me continually with coaches and chaises; barges as solemn as barons of the Exchequer move under my window; Richmond Hill and Ham Walks bound my prospects; but, thank God! the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry.* Dowagers, as plenty as flounders, inhabit all around, and Pope's ghost is just now skimming under my window by a most poetical moonlight." †

He commenced almost immediately adding to the house,

* Catherine Hyde, the eccentric friend of Pope and Gay. She was, at this time, living in a small house in Ham Walks. Walpole addressed to her the pretty compliment contained in the following lines, upon her preservation of her beauty at an advanced age: —

> "To many a Kitty, Love his ear
> Would for a day engage;
> But Prior's Kitty, ever fair,
> Retains it for an age."

† Letter of June 8th, 1747.

and gothicising it, assisted by the taste and designs of his friend Mr. Bentley; till, in the end, the cottage of Mrs. Chenevix had increased into the castellated residence we now behold. He also filled it with collections of various sorts — books, prints, pictures, portraits, enamels and miniatures, antiquities, and curiosities of all kinds. Among these miscellaneous hoards are to be found some fine works of art; and many things most valuable in an historical and antiquarian point of view. For these various expenses he drew upon his annual income, which arose from three patent places conferred on him by his father, of which the designations were, Usher of the Exchequer, Comptroller of the Pipe, and Clerk of the Estreats. As early as the year 1744, these sinecures produced to him, according to his own account, nearly two thousand a year; and somewhat later, the one place of Usher of the Exchequer rose in value to double this sum. This income, with prudent management, sufficed for the gratification of his expensive tastes of building and collecting, to which his long life was devoted.

With regard to the merits of Strawberry Hill, as a building, it is perhaps, unfair in the present age, when the principles of Gothic architecture have been so much studied, and so often put in practice, to criticise it too severely. Walpole himself, who in the earlier part of his life seems to have had an unbounded admiration for the works of his own hands, appears in later times to have been aware of the faults in style, of which he had been guilty. For in a letter to Mr. Barrett in 1788, he says, "If Mr. Matthews was really entertained" (with seeing Strawberry Hill), "I am glad. But Mr. Wyatt has made him too correct a Goth not to have seen all the imperfections and bad execution of my attempts; for neither Mr. Bentley nor my workmen had *studied* the science, and I was always too desultory and impatient to consider, that I should please myself more by allowing time, than by hurrying my plans into execution before they were ripe. My house, therefore, is but a sketch for beginners; yours* is finished by a great master — and if Mr. Matthews liked mine, it was *en virtuose*,

* Lee, in Kent.

who loves the dawnings of an art, or the glimmerings of its restoration." *

In fact, the building of Strawberry Hill was "the glimmering of the restoration" of Gothic architecture, which had previously, for above a century, been so much neglected, that its very principles seemed lost. If we compare the Gothic of Strawberry Hill with that of buildings about the same period, or a little anterior to it, we shall see how vastly superior it is to them, both in its taste and its decorations. If we look at some of the restorations of our churches of the beginning of the eighteenth century, we shall find them a most barbarous mixture of Gothic forms, and Grecian and Roman ornaments. Such are the western towers of Westminster Abbey, designed by Wren. The attempts at Gothic, by the same architect, in one or two of his city churches — Gibbs's quadrangle of All Souls College, Oxford — and the buildings in the same style of Kent, Batty Langley, &c. To these Strawberry is greatly superior; and it must be observed, that Walpole himself, in his progressive building, went on improving and purifying his taste. Thus the gallery and round-tower at Strawberry Hill, which were among his latest works, are incomparably the best part of the house — and in their interior decorations there is very little to be objected to, and much to be admired.

It were to be wished, indeed, that Walpole's haste to finish, to which he alludes in the letter just quoted, and perhaps also, in some degree, economy, had not made him build his castle, which, with all its faults, is a curious relic of a clever and ingenious man, with so little solidity, that it is almost already in a state of decay. Lath and plaster, and wood, appear to have been his favourite materials for construction — which made his friend Williams † say of him, towards the end of his life, "that he had outlived three sets of his own battlements." It is somewhat curious, as a proof of the inconsistency of the human mind, that having built his castle with so little view to durability, Walpole entailed the perishable possession with a degree of

* Letter of June 5th, 1788.

† George James Williams, Esq.

strictness, which would have been more fitting for a baronial estate. And that, too, after having written a fable entitled "The Entail;" in consequence of some one having asked him whether he did not intend to entail Strawberry Hill, and in ridicule of such a proceeding.

The next pursuit of Walpole, to which it now becomes desirable to advert, are his literary labours; and the various publications, with which, at different periods of his life, he favoured the world. His first effort appears to have been a copy of verses written at Cambridge. His poetry is generally not of a very high order — lively, and with happy turns and expressions; but injured frequently by a sort of quaintness, and a somewhat inharmonious rhythm. Its merits, however, exactly fitted it for the purpose which it was for the most part intended for; namely, as what are called *vers de société*. Among the best of his verses may be mentioned those "On the neglected Column in the Place of St. Mark, at Florence," which contain some fine lines; his "Twickenham Register," and "The Three Vernons."

In 1752, he published his "Ædes Walpolianæ," or description of the family seat of Houghton Hall, in Norfolk, where his father had built a palace, and had made a fine collection of pictures, which were sold by his grandson George, third Earl of Orford, to the Empress Catherine of Russia. This work, which is, in fact, a mere catalogue of pictures, first showed the peculiar talent of Horace Walpole for enlivening, by anecdote and lightness of style, a dry subject. This was afterwards still more exemplified in his "Anecdotes of Painting in England," of which the different volumes were published in 1761, 1763, and 1771 — and in the "Catalogue of Engravers," published in 1763. These works were compiled from the papers of Vertue the engraver; but Walpole, from the stores of his own historical knowledge, from his taste in the fine arts, and his happy manner of sketching characters, rendered them peculiarly his own. But his masterpiece in this line was his "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors," originally published in 1758. It is very true, as Sir Walter Scott observes, that "it would be difficult, by any process or principle of

subdivision, to select a list of so many plebeian authors, containing so very few whose genius was worthy of commemoration." * But this very circumstance renders the merit of Walpole the greater, in having, out of such materials, composed a work which must be read with amusement and interest, as long as liveliness of diction and felicity in anecdote are considered ingredients of amusement in literature.

In 1757, Walpole established a private printing press at Strawberry Hill, and the first work he printed at it was the Odes of Gray, with Bentley's prints and vignettes. Among the handsomest and most valuable volumes which subsequently issued from this press, in addition to Walpole's own Anecdotes of Painting, and his description of Strawberry Hill, must be mentioned the quarto Lucan, with the notes of Grotius and Bentley; the Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury by himself, Hentzner's Travels, and Lord Whitworth's Account of Russia. Of all these he printed a very limited number. It does not, however, appear, as stated in the Biographical Dictionary †, that he reserved all the copies as presents; on the contrary, it would seem, that in most instances he sold a certain portion of the copies to the booksellers, probably with a view of defraying the expenses of his printing establishment. As, however, the supply in the book-market of the Strawberry Hill editions was very small, they generally sold for high prices, and a great interest was created respecting them.

In 1764, Walpole published one of the most remarkable of his works, "The Castle of Otranto;" and in 1768 his still more remarkable production "The Mysterious Mother." In speaking of the latter effort of his genius (for it undoubtedly deserves that appellation) an admirable judge of literary excellence has made the following remarks:—"It is the fashion to under-rate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and, secondly, because he was a gentleman: but to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of 'The Castle of Otranto,' he is the *Ultimus Romanorum*, the author of the 'Mysterious

* Lives of the Novelists, Paris Edition, vol. ii.
† Biographical Dictionary by Chalmers. Article "Walpole."

Mother,' a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance, and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living author, be he who he may." *

In speaking of the "Castle of Otranto," it may be remarked as a singular coincidence in the life of Walpole, that as he had been the first person to lead the modern public to seek for their architecture in the Gothic style and age, so he also opened the great magazine of the tales of Gothic times to their literature.

The account which Walpole himself gives of the circumstances which led to the composition of "The Castle of Otranto," of his fancy of the portrait of Lord Deputy Falkland, in the gallery at Strawberry Hill, walking out of its frame, and of his dream of a gigantic hand in armour on the banister of a great staircase, are well-known. Perhaps it may be objected to him, that he makes too frequent use of supernatural machinery in his romance; but at the time it was written this portion of his work was peculiarly acceptable to the public. We have since, from the labours of the immense tribe of his followers and imitators of different degrees of merit, "supped so full of horrors," that we are become more fastidious upon these points; and even, perhaps, unfairly so, as at the present moment the style of supernatural romances in general is rather fallen again into neglect and disfavour.

The next publication of Walpole was his "Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third," one of the most ingenious historical and antiquarian dissertations which has ever issued from the press.

The remainder of the works of Walpole, published or printed in his lifetime, consist of minor, or, as he calls them, "Fugitive Pieces." Of these the most remarkable are his papers in "The World," and other periodicals.—"A Letter from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher, in London," on the politics of the day.—The "Essay on Modern Gardening."—The pamphlet called "A Counter Address," on the dismissal of Marshal Conway from his command of a regiment. The fanciful, but lively, "Hieroglyphic

* Lord Byron, preface to "Marino Faliero."

Tales."—And "The Reminiscences," or Recollections of Court and Political Anecdotes; which last he wrote for the amusement of the Miss Berrys. All of these are marked with those peculiarities, and those graces of style, which belonged to him; and may still be read, however various their subjects, with interest and instruction. The Reminiscences are peculiarly curious—and may perhaps be stated to be, both in manner and matter, the very perfection of anecdote writing.

Since the death of Walpole, a portion of his political memoirs, comprising the history of the last ten years of the reign of George the Second, has been published; and has made a very remarkable addition to the historical information of that period. At the same time it must be allowed, that this work has not entirely fulfilled the expectation which the public had formed of it. Though full of curious and interesting details, it can hardly be said to form a very interesting whole; while in no other of the publications of the author do his prejudices and aversions appear in so strong and unreasonable a light.

But the posthumous works of Walpole, upon which his lasting fame with posterity will probably rest, are his "incomparable letters."* Of these a considerable portion was published in the quarto edition of his works in 1798; since which period a quarto volume, containing his letters to George Montagu, Esq. and the Rev. William Cole, and another, containing those to Lord Hertford and the Rev. Henry Zouch, have been given to the world. His correspondence with Sir Horace Mann completes the series, which extends from the year 1735 to the commencement of 1797, within six weeks of his death—a period of no less than fifty-seven years.

Gray had been a school friend of Walpole. As has been before mentioned, they travelled together, and quarrelled during the journey. Walter Scott suggests as a reason for their differences, "that the youthful vivacity, and perhaps aristocratic assumption, of Walpole, did not agree with the somewhat formal opinions and habits of the professed

* Lord Byron.

man of letters."* This conjecture may very possibly be the correct one; but we have no clue to guide us with certainty to the causes of their rupture. In after-life they were reconciled, though the intimacy of early friendship never appears to have been restored between them. Scott says of Walpole, that "his temper was precarious"*—and we may, perhaps, affirm the same of Gray. At all events, they were persons of such different characters, that their not agreeing could not be surprising. What could be more opposite, than "the self-sequestered, melancholy Gray," and the eager, volatile Walpole, of whom Lady Townshend said, when some one talked of his good spirits, "Oh, Mr. Walpole is spirits of hartshorn."

In concluding the literary part of the character of Walpole, it is natural to allude to the transactions which took place between him and the unfortunate Chatterton; a text upon which so much of calumny and misrepresentation have been embroidered. The periodicals of the day, and the tribe of those "who daily scribble for their daily bread," and for whom Walpole had, perhaps unwisely, frequently expressed his contempt, attacked him bitterly for his inhumanity to genius, and even accused him as the author of the subsequent misfortunes and untimely death of that misguided son of genius; nay, even the author of "The Pursuits of Literature," who wrote many years after the transaction had taken place, and who ought to have known better, gave in to the prevailing topic of abuse.† It therefore becomes necessary to state shortly what really took place upon this occasion; a task which is rendered easier, by the clear view of the transaction, taken both by Sir Walter Scott in his "Lives of the Novelists," and by Chalmers in his "Biographical Dictionary," which is also fully borne

* Lives of the Novelists.

† See "Pursuits of Literature," second Dialogue:—

> "The boy, whom once patrician pens adorn'd,
> First meanly flatter'd, then as meanly scorn'd."

Which lines are stated in a note to allude to Walpole.—See also first Dialogue, where Chatterton is called "that varlet bright." The note to which passage is, "I am the veriest varlet that ever chew'd, says *Falstaff*, in Henry IV. part i. act 2. Mr. Horace Walpole, now Lord Orford, did not, however, seem to think it necessary that this *varlet* Chatterton should *chew at all.* See the Starvation Act, dated at Strawberry Hill."

out by the narrative drawn up by Walpole himself, and accompanied by the correspondence.

It appears, then, that in March, 1769, Walpole received a letter from Chatterton, enclosing a few specimens of the pretended poems of Rowley, and announcing his discovery of a series of ancient painters at Bristol. To this communication Walpole, naturally enough, returned a very civil answer. Shortly afterwards, doubts arose in his mind as to the authenticity of the poems: these were confirmed by the opinions of some friends, to whom he showed them; and he then wrote an expression of these doubts to Chatterton. This appears to have excited the anger of Chatterton, who, after one or two short notes, wrote Walpole a very impertinent one, in which he re-demanded his manuscripts. This last letter Walpole had intended to have answered with some sharpness; but did not do so. He only returned the specimens on the fourth of August, 1769; and this concluded the intercourse between them; and, as Walpole observes, "I never saw him then, before, or since." Subsequently to this transaction, Chatterton acquired other patrons more credulous than Walpole, and proceeded with his forgeries. In April, 1770, he came to London, and committed suicide in August of that year; a fate which befell him, it is to be feared, more in consequence of his own dissolute and profligate habits than from any want of patronage. However this may be, Walpole clearly had nothing to say to it.

In addition to the accusation of crushing, instead of fostering his genius, Walpole has also been charged with cruelty in not assisting him with money. Upon this, he very truly says himself, "Chatterton was neither indigent nor distressed at the time of his correspondence with me. He was maintained by his mother, and lived with a lawyer. His only pleas to my assistance were, disgust to his profession, inclination to poetry, and communication of some suspicious MSS. His distress was the consequence of quitting his master, and coming to London, and of his other extravagances. He had depended on the impulse of the talents he felt for making impression, and lifting him to wealth, honours, and fame. I have already said, that I

should have been blamable to his mother and society, if I had seduced an apprentice from his master to marry him to the nine Muses; and I should have encouraged a propensity to forgery, which is not the talent most wanting culture in the present age."* Such and so unimportant was the transaction with Chatterton, which brought so much obloquy on Walpole, and seems really to have given him at different times great annoyance.

There remains but little more to relate in the life of Walpole. His old age glided on peacefully, and, with the exception of his severe sufferings from the gout, apparently contentedly, in the pursuit of his favourite studies and employments. In the year 1791, he succeeeded his unhappy nephew, George, third Earl of Orford, who had at different periods of his life been insane, in the family estate and the earldom. The accession of this latter dignity seems rather to have annoyed him than otherwise. He never took his seat in the House of Lords, and his unwillingness to adopt his title was shown in his endeavours to avoid making use of it in his signature. He not unfrequently signed himself, "The Uncle of the late Earl of Orford."†

He retained his faculties to the last, but his limbs became helpless from his frequent attacks of gout. As he himself expresses it,—

> "Fortune, who scatters her gifts out of season,
> Though unkind to my limbs, has yet left me my reason."‡

A friend of his, who only knew him in the last years of his life, speaks of "his conversation as being as singularly brilliant as it was original§;" we may therefore conclude that his liveliness never deserted him; that his talent for letter-writing did not, we have a proof in a letter written only six weeks before his death, in which, with all his accustomed grace of manner, he entreats a lady of his acquaintance not to show "the idle notes" of "her ancient servant."

* Letter to the editor of the Miscellanies of Chatterton. Works of Lord Orford, vol. iv.

† The Duke of Bedford has a letter of Walpole's with this signature.

‡ "Epitaphium vivi auctoris"—1792.

§ "Social Life in England and France."

Lord Orford died in the eightieth year of his age, at his house in Berkeley Square, on the 2d of March, 1797, and was buried with his family in the church at Houghton; and with him concluded the male line of the descendants of Sir Robert Walpole.

D.

"It is doing injustice," says Sir Walter Scott*, "to Mr. Walpole's memory to allege, that all which he aimed at in *The Castle of Otranto* was 'the art of exciting surprise and horror;' or, in other words, the appeal to that secret and reserved feeling of love for the marvellous and supernatural, which occupies a hidden corner in almost every one's bosom. Were this all which he had attempted, the means by which he sought to attain his purpose might, with justice, be termed both clumsy and puerile. But Mr. Walpole's purpose was both more difficult of attainment, and more important when attained. It was his object to draw such a picture of domestic life and manners, during the feudal times, as might actually have existed, and to paint it checkered and agitated by the action of supernatural machinery, such as the superstition of the period received as matter of devout credulity. The natural parts of the narrative are so contrived, that they associate themselves with the marvellous occurrences; and, by the force of that association, render those *speciosa miracula* striking and impressive, though our cooler reason admits their impossibility. Indeed, to produce, in a well-cultivated mind, any portion of that surprise and fear which are founded on supernatural events, the frame and tenour of the whole story must be adjusted in perfect harmony with this main-spring of the interest. He who, in early youth, has happened to pass a solitary night in one of the few ancient mansions which the fashion of more modern times has left undespoiled of their original furniture, has probably experienced, that the gigantic and preposterous figures dimly visible in

* See "Lives of the Novelists," by Sir Walter Scott.

the defaced tapestry, — the remote clang of the distant doors which divide him from living society, — the deep darkness which involves the high and fretted roof of the apartment, — the dimly-seen pictures of ancient knights, renowned for their valour, and perhaps for their crimes, — the varied and indistinct sounds which disturb the silent desolation of a half-deserted mansion, — and, to crown all, the feeling that carries us back to ages of feudal power and papal superstition, join together to excite a corresponding sensation of supernatural awe, if not of terror. It is in such situations, when superstition becomes contagious, that we listen with respect, and even with dread, to the legends which are our sport in the garish light of sunshine, and amid the dissipating sights and sounds of every-day life. Now, it seems to have been Walpole's object to attain, by the minute accuracy of a fable, sketched with singular attention to the costume of the period in which the scene was laid, that same association which might prepare his reader's mind for the reception of prodigies congenial to the creed and feelings of the actors. His feudal tyrant, his distressed damsel, his resigned yet dignified churchman, — the castle itself, with its feudal arrangements of dungeons, trap-doors, oratories, and galleries, — the incidents of the trial, the chivalrous procession, and the combat; — in short, the scene, the performers, and action, so far as it is natural, form the accompaniments of his spectres and his miracles, and have the same effect on the mind of the reader, that the appearance and drapery of such a chamber as we have described may produce upon that of a temporary inmate. This was a task which required no little learning, no ordinary degree of fancy, no common portion of genius, to execute. The association of which we have spoken is of a nature peculiarly delicate, and subject to be broken and disarranged. It is, for instance, almost impossible to build such a modern Gothic structure as shall impress us with the feelings we have endeavoured to describe. It may be grand, or it may be gloomy; it may excite magnificent or melancholy ideas; but it must fail in bringing forth the sensation of supernatural awe, connected with halls that have echoed to the sounds of remote generations, and have been pressed by

the footsteps of those who have long since passed away. Yet Horace Walpole has attained, in composition, what, as an architect, he must have felt beyond the power of his art. The remote and superstitious period in which his scene is laid, — the art with which he has furnished forth its Gothic decorations, — the sustained, and, in general, the dignified tone of feudal manners, — prepare us gradually for the favourable reception of prodigies which, though they could not really have happened at any period, were consistent with the belief of all mankind at that in which the action is placed. It was, therefore, the author's object, not merely to excite surprise and terror, by the introduction of supernatural agency, but to wind up the feelings of his reader till they became for a moment identified with those of a ruder age, which

Held each strange tale devoutly true.

"The difficulty of attaining this nice accuracy of delineation may be best estimated by comparing *The Castle of Otranto* with the less successful efforts of later writers; where, amid all their attempts to assume the tone of antique chivalry, something occurs in every chapter so decidedly incongruous, as at once reminds us of an ill-sustained masquerade, in which ghosts, knights-errant, magicians, and damsels, are all equipped in hired dresses from the same warehouse in Tavistock Street."

This is perfectly true as regards the greater number of English romances of which the scene is laid in remote times, and wherein supernatural agency is employed. The most memorable exception that occurs to us at present is the last of Mrs. Radcliffe's Tales, "Gaston de Blondeville." In this, the quaint but grand tone of the middle ages is so admirably preserved throughout, and with so astonishing an air of verisimilitude, as to defy the utmost sagacity of the antiquarian to detect any, even a slight, anachronism. The reader resigns his faith implicitly to all the details; is placed, as by a powerful charm, in the baronial halls and "pleasaunces" of our forefathers; sees their magnificent pageants, and accompanies them in their wild forest hunts.

The ghost, too, is one of the most solemn and affecting that was ever evoked from the dreary land of spirits; and so strikingly are its occasional appearances brought about, as to make us regret that in her former works the gifted authoress should have seemingly disdained the agency of the supernatural world. To say nothing of the exceeding interest of the tale, "Gaston" (if only for the poetical grandeur of the being who so awfully "revisits the glimpses of the moon") is entitled to assume a higher rank in romantic fiction than any other which Mrs. Radcliffe has produced. Some of the late German romances, particularly the "Sintram" of La Motte Fouqué, are also exceptions to Sir Walter's assertion.

"It cannot, however, be denied," proceeds Sir Walter in another part of his remarks, "that the character of the supernatural machinery in *The Castle of Otranto* is liable to objections. Its action and interference is rather too frequent, and presses too hard and constantly upon the same feelings in the reader's mind, to the hazard of diminishing the elasticity of the spring upon which it should operate. The fund of fearful sympathy which can be afforded by a modern reader to a tale of wonder is much diminished by the present habits of life and modes of education. Our ancestors could wonder and thrill through all the mazes of an interminable metrical romance of fairy land, and of an enchantment, the work perhaps of some

> Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
> Believed the magic wonders which he sung.

But our habits and feelings and belief are different, and a transient, though vivid, impression is all that can be excited by a tale of wonder even in the most fanciful mind of the present day. By the too frequent recurrence of his prodigies, Mr. Walpole ran, perhaps, his greatest risk of awakening *la raison froide*, that 'cold common sense,' which he justly deemed the greatest enemy of the effect which he hoped to produce. It may be added, also, that the supernatural occurrences of *The Castle of Otranto* are brought forward into too strong daylight, and marked by an over degree of distinctness and accuracy of outline. A mysterious obscurity seems congenial at least, if not essen-

tial, to our ideas of disembodied spirits; and the gigantic limbs of the ghost of Alphonso, as described by the terrified domestics, are somewhat too distinct and corporeal to produce the feelings which their appearance is intended to excite. This fault, however, if it be one, is more than compensated by the high merit of many of the marvellous incidents in the romance. The descent of the picture of Manfred's ancestor, although it borders on extravagance, is finely introduced, and interrupts an interesting dialogue with striking effect. We have heard it observed, that the animated figure should rather have been a statue than a picture. We greatly doubt the justice of the criticism. The advantage of the colouring induces us decidedly to prefer Mr. Walpole's fiction to the proposed substitute. There are few who have not felt, at some period of their childhood, a sort of terror from the manner in which the eye of an ancient portrait appears to fix that of the spectator from every point of view."

We differ here from the great critic. The *colouring*, instead of increasing the effect of such an apparition, would evidently diminish its ghastliness, and so far render it less impressive. The ghost, in the old story of Don Juan, is an animated monumental effigy. The idea of such an agent is absurd enough; but it may safely be asserted, that every one who has read the legend of the Spanish libertine, and every one who has heard the awful music by which the avenger's advent is announced in Mozart's opera, has felt his heart thrill at that phantom of stone. One of the most fearful conceptions that ever issued from the hypochondriacal mind of Cowper the poet is that where, describing his own profound and dreary melancholy, he says that any one, on seeing him pace in listless abstraction about his garden, might think that he beheld

"a *Statue* walk."

The power of this gloomy image is obviously derived from the *whiteness* of the marble figure so brought before the imagination. Colour would at once dissipate the spell.

"It is, perhaps," continues Sir Walter, "hypercritical to remark, (what, however, Walpole of all authors might

have been expected to attend to,) that the time assigned to the action, being about the eleventh century, is rather too early for the introduction of a full-length portrait. The apparition of the skeleton hermit to the prince of Vicenza was long accounted a master-piece of the horrible; but of late the valley of Jehosophat could hardly supply the dry bones necessary for the exhibition of similar spectres, so that injudicious and repeated imitation has, in some degree, injured the effect of its original model. What is more striking in *The Castle of Otranto* is the manner in which the various prodigious appearances, bearing each upon the other, and all upon the accomplishment of the ancient prophecy, denouncing the ruin of the house of Manfred, gradually prepare us for the grand catastrophe. The moonlight vision of Alphonso dilated to immense magnitude, the astonished group of spectators in the front, and the shattered ruins of the castle in the back-ground, are briefly and sublimely described. We know no passage of similar merit, unless it be the apparition of Fadzean, or Faudoun, in an ancient Scottish poem.

"That part of the romance which depends upon human feelings and agency is conducted with the dramatic talent which afterwards was so conspicuous in *The Mysterious Mother*. The persons are indeed rather generic than individual; but this was in a degree necessary to a plan, calculated rather to exhibit a general view of society and manners during the times which the author's imagination loved to contemplate, than the more minute shades and discriminating points of particular characters. But the actors in the romance are strikingly drawn, with bold outlines becoming the age and nature of the story. Feudal tyranny was, perhaps, never better exemplified than in the character of Manfred. He has the courage, the art, the duplicity, the ambition of a barbarous chieftain of the dark ages, yet with touches of remorse and natural feeling, which preserve some sympathy for him when his pride is quelled, and his race extinguished. The pious monk, and the patient Hippolita, are well contrasted with this selfish and tyrannical prince. Theodore is the juvenile hero of a romantic tale, and Matilda has more interesting sweetness

than usually belongs to its heroine. As the character of Isabella is studiously kept down, in order to relieve that of the daughter of Manfred, few readers are pleased with the concluding insinuation, that she became at length the bride of Theodore. This is in some degree a departure from the rules of chivalry, and, however natural an occurrence in common life, rather injures the magic illusions of romance. In other respects, making allowance for the extraordinary incidents of a dark and tempestuous age, the story, so far as within the course of natural events, is happily detailed, its progress is uniform, its events interesting and well combined, and the conclusion grand, tragical, and affecting."

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear. The principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of Christianity; but the language and conduct have nothing that savours of barbarism. The style is the purest Italian. If the story was written near the time when it is supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the era of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards. There is no other circumstance in the work, that can lead us to guess at the period in which the scene is laid: the names of the actors are evidently fictitious, and probably disguised on purpose; yet the Spanish names of the domestics seem to indicate, that this work was not composed until the establishment of the Arragonian kings in Naples had made Spanish appellations familiar in that country. The beauty of the diction, and the zeal of the author, (moderated, however, by singular judgment,) concur to make me think that the date of the composition was little antecedent to that of the impression. Letters were then in the most flourishing state in Italy, and contributed to dispel the empire of superstition, at that time so forciby attacked by the reformers. It is not unlikely that an artful priest might endeavour to turn their own arms on the innovators; and might avail himself of

his abilities, as an author, to confirm the populace in their ancient errors and superstitions. If this was his view, he has certainly acted with signal address. Such a work as the following would enslave a hundred vulgar minds beyond half the books of controversy that have been written from the days of Luther to the present hour.

This solution of the author's motives is, however, offered as a mere conjecture. Whatever his views were, or whatever effects the execution of them might have, his work can only be laid before the public at present as a matter of entertainment. Even as such some apology for it is necessary. Miracles, visions, necromances, dreams, and other preternatural events, are exploded now even from romances. That was not the case when our author wrote; much less when the story itself is supposed to have happened. Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the manners of the times who should omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he must represent his actors as believing them.

If this air of the miraculous is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal. Allow the possibility of the facts, and all the actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation. There is no bombast, no similes, flowers, digressions, or unnecessary descriptions. Every thing tends directly to the catastrophe. Never is the reader's attention relaxed. The rules of the drama are almost observed throughout the conduct of the piece. The characters are well drawn, and still better maintained. Terror, the author's principal engine, prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions.

Some persons may, perhaps, think the characters of the domestics too little serious for the general cast of the story; but, besides their opposition to the principal personages, the art of the author is very observable in his conduct of the subalterns. They discover many passages essential to the story, which could not be well brought to light but by their *naïveté* and simplicity: in particular, the womanish

terror and foibles of Bianca, in the last chapter, conduce essentially towards advancing the catastrophe.

It is natural for a translator to be prejudiced in favour of his adopted work. More impartial readers may not be so much struck with the beauties of this piece as I was. Yet I am not blind to my author's defects. I could wish he had grounded his plan on a more useful moral than this; that *the sins of the fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation.* I doubt whether, in his time, any more than at present, ambition curbed its appetite of dominion from the dread of so remote a punishment. And yet this moral is weakened by that less direct insinuation, that even such anathema may be diverted by devotion to St. Nicholas. Here the interest of the monk plainly gets the better of the judgment of the author. However, with all its faults, I have no doubt but the English reader will be pleased with a sight of this performance. The piety that reigns throughout, the lessons of virtue that are inculcated, and the rigid purity of the sentiments, exempt this work from the censure to which romances are but too liable. Should it meet with the success I hope for, I may be encouraged to reprint the original Italian, though it will tend to depreciate my own labour. Our language falls far short of the charms of the Italian, both for variety and harmony. The latter is peculiarly excellent for simple narrative. It is difficult in English *to relate* without falling too low or rising too high; a fault obviously occasioned by the little care taken to speak pure language in common conversation. Every Italian or Frenchman, of any rank, piques himself on speaking his own tongue correctly and with choice. I cannot flatter myself with having done justice to my author in this respect: his style is as elegant, as his conduct of the passions is masterly. It is pity that he did not apply his talents to what they were evidently proper for,—the theatre.

I will detain the reader no longer, but to make one short remark. Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe, that the groundwork of the story is founded on truth. The scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle. The author seems frequently, without design, to describe particular

parts, *The chamber,* says he, *on the right hand; the door on the left hand; the distance from the chapel to* Conrad's *apartment:* these, and other passages, are strong presumptions that the author had some certain building in his eye. Curious persons, who have leisure to employ in such researches, may possibly discover in the Italian writers the foundation on which our author has built. If a catastrophe, at all resembling that which he describes, is believed to have given rise to this work, it will contribute to interest the reader, and will make THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO a still more moving story.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The favourable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public calls upon the author to explain the grounds on which he composed it. But before he opens those motives, it is fit that he should ask pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a translator. As diffidence of his own abilities, and the novelty of the attempt, were the sole inducements to assume that disguise, he flatters himself he shall appear excusable. He resigned his performance to the impartial judgment of the public; determined to let it perish in obscurity, if disapproved; nor meaning to avow such a trifle, unless better judges should pronounce that he might own it without a blush.

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability; in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if in the latter species nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old romances. The actions, sentiments, conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days, were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion.

The author of the following pages thought it possible to reconcile the two kinds. Desirous of leaving the powers

of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak, and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions. He had observed, that in all inspired writings, the personages under the dispensation of miracles, and witnesses to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character; whereas, in the productions of romantic story, an improbable event never fails to be attended by an absurd dialogue. The actors seem to lose their senses, the moment the laws of nature have lost their tone. As the public have applauded the attempt, the author must not say he was entirely unequal to the task he had undertaken; yet if the new route he has struck out shall have paved a road for men of brighter talents, he shall own with pleasure and modesty, that he was sensible the plan was capable of receiving greater embellishments than his imagination or conduct of the passions could bestow on it.

With regard to the department of the domestics, on which I have touched in the former preface, I will beg leave to add a few words. The simplicity of their behaviour, almost tending to excite smiles, which at first seems not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only not improper, but was marked designedly in that manner. My rule was nature. However grave, important, or even melancholy, the sensations of princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics; at least the latter do not, or should not be made to express their passions in the same dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one and the *naïveté* of the other, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger light. The very impatience which a reader feels while delayed by the coarse pleasantries of vulgar actors from arriving at the knowledge of the important catastrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves, that he has been artfully interested in the depending event. But I had higher authority than my own opinion for this conduct. That great master of nature,

Shakspeare, was the model I copied. Let me ask if his tragedies of Hamlet and Julius Cæsar would not lose a considerable share of their spirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of Polonius, and the clumsy jests of the Roman citizens, were omitted, or vested in heroics? Is not the eloquence of Antony, the nobler and affectedly-unaffected oration of Brutus, artificially exalted by the rude bursts of nature from the mouths of their auditors? These touches remind one of the Grecian sculptor, who, to convey the idea of a Colossus within the dimensions of a seal, inserted a little boy measuring his thumb.

No, says Voltaire, in his edition of Corneille, this mixture of buffoonery and solemnity is intolerable.—Voltaire is a genius* — but not of Shakspeare's magnitude. Without recurring to disputable authority, I appeal from Voltaire to himself. I shall not avail myself of his former encomiums on our mighty poet, though the French critic has twice translated the same speech in Hamlet, some years ago in admiration, latterly in derision; and I am sorry to find that his judgment grows weaker when it ought to be farther matured. But I shall make use of his own words, delivered on the general topic of the theatre, when he was neither thinking to recommend or decry Shakspeare's practice; consequently at a moment when Voltaire was impartial. In the preface to his Enfant Prodigue, that exquisite piece, of which I declare my admiration, and which, should I live twenty years longer, I trust I shall

* The following remark is foreign to the present question, yet excusable in an Englishman, who is willing to think that the severe criticisms of so masterly a writer as Voltaire on our immortal countryman may have been the effusions of wit and precipitation, rather than the result of judgment and attention. May not the critic's skill in the force and power of our language have been as incorrect and incompetent as his knowledge of our history? of the latter his own pen has dropped glaring evidence. In his preface to Thomas Corneille's Earl of Essex, Monsieur de Voltaire allows that the truth of history has been grossly perverted in that piece. In excuse, he pleads, that when Corneille wrote, the noblesse of France were much unread in English story; but now, says the commentator, that they study it, such misrepresentations would not be suffered—yet, forgetting that the period of ignorance is lapsed, and that it is not very necessary to instruct the knowing, he undertakes, from the overflowing of his own reading, to give the nobility of his own country a detail of Queen Elizabeth's favourites,—of whom, says he, Robert Dudley was the first, and the Earl of Leicester the second.—Could one have believed that it could be necessary to inform Monsieur de Voltaire himself, that Robert Dudley and the Earl of Leicester were the same person?

never attempt to ridicule, he has these words, speaking of comedy (but equally applicable to tragedy, if tragedy is, as surely it ought to be, a picture of human life; nor can I conceive why occasional pleasantry ought more to be banished from the tragic scene, than pathetic seriousness from the comic):—"*On y voit un melange de serieux et de plaisanterie, de comique et de touchant;* souvent meme une seule avanture *produit tous ces contrastes. Rien n'est si commun qu'une maison dans laquelle* un pere gronde, une fille occupée de sa passion pleure; *le fils se moque des deux, et quelques parens prennent part differemment à la scene,* &c. *Nous n'inferons pas de là que toute comedie doive avoir des scenes de bouffonerie et des scenes attendrissantes: il y a beaucoup de tres bonnes pièces où il ne regne que de la gayeté; d'autres toutes serieuses; d'autres melangées: d'autres ou l'attendrissement va jusqu'aux larmes:* il ne faut donner l'exclusion à aucun genre: *et si l'on me demandoit quel genre est le meilleur, je repondrois, celui qui est le mieux traité.*" Surely if a comedy may be *toute serieuse,* tragedy may now and then, soberly, be indulged in a smile. Who shall proscribe it? shall the critic, who, in self-defence, declares that *no kind* ought to be excluded from comedy, give laws to Shakspeare?

I am aware that the preface from whence I have quoted these passages, does not stand in Monsieur de Voltaire's name, but in that of his editor; yet who doubts that the editor and author were the same person? or where is the editor, who has so happily possessed himself of his author's style and brilliant ease of argument? These passages were indubitably the genuine sentiments of that great writer. In his epistle to Maffei, prefixed to his Merope, he delivers almost the same opinion, though I doubt with a little irony. I will repeat his words, and then give my reason for quoting them. After translating a passage in Maffei's Merope, Monsieur de Voltaire adds, "*Tous ces traits sont naïfs: tout y est convenable à ceux que vous introduisez sur la scene,* et aux mœurs que vous leur donnez. *Ces familiarités naturelles eussent été, à ce que je crois, bien reçues dans Athenes; mais Paris et notre parterre veulent une autre espece de*

simplicité." I doubt, I say, whether there is not a grain of sneer in this and other passages of that epistle; yet the force of truth is not damaged by being tinged with ridicule. Maffei was to represent a Grecian story: surely the Athenians were as competent judges of Grecian manners, and of the propriety of introducing them, as the parterre of Paris. On the contrary, says Voltaire (and I cannot but admire his reasoning), there were but ten thousand citizens at Athens, and Paris has near eight hundred thousand inhabitants, among whom one may reckon thirty thousand judges of dramatic works. — Indeed! but, allowing so numerous a tribunal, I believe this is the only instance in which it was ever pretended, that thirty thousand persons, living near two thousand years after the era in question, were, upon the mere face of the poll, declared better judges than the Grecians themselves, of what ought to be the manners of a tragedy written on a Grecian story.

I will not enter into a discussion of the *espece de simplicité*, which the parterre of Paris demands, nor of the shackles with which *the thirty thousand judges* have cramped their poetry, the chief merit of which, as I gather from repeated passages in The New Commentary on Corneille, consists in vaulting in spite of those fetters; a merit which, if true, would reduce poetry, from the lofty effort of imagination, to a puerile and most contemptible labour — *difficiles nugæ* with a witness! I cannot, however, help mentioning a couplet, which, to my English ears, always sounded as the flattest and most trifling instance of circumstantial propriety: but which Voltaire, who has dealt so severely with nine parts in ten of Corneille's works, has singled out to defend in Racine: —

> De son appartement cette porte est prochaine,
> Et cette autre conduit dans celui de la reine.

In English.

> To Cæsar's closet through this door you come,
> And t' other leads to the queen's drawing-room.

Unhappy Shakspeare! hadst thou made Rosencrantz inform his compeer, Guildenstern, of the ichnography of the palace of Copenhagen, instead of presenting us with a

moral dialogue between the Prince of Denmark and the grave-digger, the illuminated pit of Paris would have been instructed *a second time* to adore thy talents.

The result of all I have said is, to shelter my own daring under the canon of the brightest genius this country, at least, has produced. I might have pleaded, that having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: but I should be more proud of having imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a distance, so masterly a pattern, than to enjoy the entire merit of invention, unless I could have marked my work with genius as well as with originality. Such as it is, the public have honoured it sufficiently, whatever rank their suffrages allot to it.

SONNET

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY MARY COKE.

The gentle maid, whose hapless tale
  These melancholy pages speak;
Say, gracious lady, shall she fail
  To draw the tear adown thy cheek?

No; never was thy pitying breast
  Insensible to human woes;
Tender, though firm, it melts distrest
  For weaknesses it never knows.

Oh! guard the marvels I relate
Of fell ambition scourg'd by fate,
  From reason's peevish blame.
Blest with thy smile, my dauntless sail
I dare expand to fancy's gale,
  For sure thy smiles are fame.

H. W.

THE

CASTLE OF OTRANTO:

A GOTHIC STORY.

CHAPTER I.

MANFRED, Prince of Otranto, had one son and one daughter: the latter, a most beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called Matilda. Conrad, the son, was three years younger, a homely youth, sickly, and of no promising disposition; yet he was the darling of his father, who never showed any symptoms of affection to Matilda. Manfred had contracted a marriage for his son with the Marquis of Vicenza's daughter, Isabella; and she had already been delivered by her guardians into the hands of Manfred, that he might celebrate the wedding as soon as Conrad's infirm state of health would permit. Manfred's impatience for this ceremonial was remarked by his family and neighbours. The former, indeed, apprehending the severity of their prince's disposition, did not dare to utter their surmises on this precipitation. Hippolita, his wife, an amiable lady, did sometimes venture to represent the danger of marrying their only son so early, considering his great youth, and greater infirmities; but she never received any other answer than reflections on her own sterility, who had given him but one heir. His tenants and subjects were less cautious in their discourses: they attributed this hasty wedding to the prince's dread of seeing accomplished an ancient prophecy, which was said to have pronounced, that *the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown*

too large to inhabit it. It was difficult to make any sense of this prophecy; and still less easy to conceive what it had to do with the marriage in question. Yet these mysteries, or contradictions, did not make the populace adhere the less to their opinion.

Young Conrad's birthday was fixed for his espousals. The company was assembled in the chapel of the castle, and every thing ready for beginning the divine office, when Conrad himself was missing. Manfred, impatient of the least delay, and who had not observed his son retire, despatched one of his attendants to summon the young prince. The servant, who had not stayed long enough to have crossed the court to Conrad's apartment, came running back breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court. The company were struck with terror and amazement. The Princess Hippolita, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away. Manfred, less apprehensive than enraged at the procrastination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domestic, asked imperiously what was the matter? The fellow made no answer, but continued pointing towards the court-yard; and, at last, after repeated questions put to him, cried out,—

"Oh! the helmet! the helmet!"

In the mean time, some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror, and surprise. Manfred, who began to be alarmed at not seeing his son, went himself to get information of what occasioned this strange confusion. Matilda remained endeavouring to assist her mother, and Isabella stayed for the same purpose, and to avoid showing any impatience for the bridegroom, for whom, in truth, she had conceived little affection.

The first thing that struck Manfred's eyes was a group of his servants endeavouring to raise something that appeared to him a mountain of sable plumes. He gazed without believing his sight. "What are ye doing?" cried Manfred, wrathfully. "Where is my son?"

A volley of voices replied, "Oh! my lord! the prince! the prince! the helmet! the helmet!"

Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what, he advanced hastily—but, what a sight for a father's eyes!—he beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, a hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

The horror of the spectacle, the ignorance of all around how this misfortune had happened, and, above all, the tremendous phenomenon before him, took away the prince's speech. Yet his silence lasted longer than even grief could occasion. He fixed his eyes on what he wished in vain to believe a vision; and seemed less attentive to his loss, than buried in meditation on the stupendous object that had occasioned it. He touched, he examined, the fatal casque; nor could even the bleeding mangled remains of the young prince divert the eyes of Manfred from the portent before him. All who had known his partial fondness for young Conrad were as much surprised at their prince's insensibility, as thunderstruck themselves at the miracle of the helmet. They conveyed the disfigured corpse into the hall, without receiving the least direction from Manfred. As little was he attentive to the ladies who remained in the chapel; on the contrary, without mentioning the unhappy princesses, his wife and daughter, the first sounds that dropped from Manfred's lips were, "Take care of the Lady Isabella."

The domestics, without observing the singularity of this direction, were guided by their affection to their mistress, to consider it as peculiarly addressed to her situation, and flew to her assistance. They conveyed her to her chamber more dead than alive, and indifferent to all the strange circumstances she heard, except the death of her son. Matilda, who doted on her mother, smothered her own grief and amazement, and thought of nothing but assisting and comforting her afflicted parent. Isabella, who had been treated by Hippolita like a daughter, and who returned that tenderness with equal duty and affection, was scarce less assiduous about the princess; at the same time endeavouring to partake and lessen the weight of sorrow

which she saw Matilda strove to suppress, for whom she had conceived the warmest sympathy of friendship. Yet her own situation could not help finding its place in her thoughts. She felt no concern for the death of young Conrad, except commiseration; and she was not sorry to be delivered from a marriage which had promised her little felicity, either from her destined bridegroom, or from the severe temper of Manfred, who, though he had distinguished her by great indulgence, had impressed her mind with terror, from his causeless rigour to such amiable princesses as Hippolita and Matilda.

While the ladies were conveying the wretched mother to her bed, Manfred remained in the court, gazing on the ominous casque, and regardless of the crowd which the strangeness of the event had now assembled around him. The few words he articulated tended solely to enquiries, whether any man knew from whence it could have come? Nobody could give him the least information. However, as it seemed to be the sole object of his curiosity, it soon became so to the rest of the spectators, whose conjectures were as absurd and improbable, as the catastrophe itself was unprecedented. In the midst of their senseless guesses, a young peasant, whom rumour had drawn thither from a neighbouring village, observed, that the miraculous helmet was exactly like that on the figure in black marble of Alfonso the Good, one of their former princes, in the church of St. Nicholas.

"Villain! what sayest thou?" cried Manfred, starting from his trance in a tempest of rage, and seizing the young man by the collar; "how darest thou utter such treason? thy life shall pay for it."

The spectators, who as little comprehended the cause of the prince's fury as all the rest they had seen, were at a loss to unravel this new circumstance. The young peasant himself was still more astonished, not conceiving how he had offended the prince; yet, recollecting himself, with a mixture of grace and humility, he disengaged himself from Manfred's gripe, and then, with an obeisance which discovered more jealousy of innocence than dismay, he asked, with respect, of what he was guilty? Manfred, more enraged at the

vigour, however decently exerted, with which the young man had shaken off his hold, than appeased by his submission, ordered his attendants to seize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends, whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poniarded the peasant in their arms.

During this altercation, some of the vulgar spectators had run to the great church, which stood near the castle, and came back open-mouthed, declaring, that the helmet was missing from Alfonso's statue. Manfred, at this news, grew perfectly frantic; and, as if he sought a subject on which to vent the tempest within him, he rushed again on the young peasant, crying, "Villain! monster! sorcerer! 't is thou hast done this! 't is thou hast slain my son!"

The mob, who wanted some object within the scope of their capacities, on whom they might discharge their bewildered reasonings, caught the words from the mouth of their lord, and re-echoed, "Ay, ay; 't is he, 't is he! he has stolen the helmet from good Alfonso's tomb, and dashed out the brains of our young prince with it," never reflecting how enormous the disproportion was between the marble helmet that had been in the church, and that of steel before their eyes; nor how impossible it was for a youth, seemingly not twenty, to wield a piece of armour of so prodigious a weight.

The folly of these ejaculations brought Manfred to himself: yet, whether provoked at the peasant having observed the resemblance between the two helmets, and thereby led to the farther discovery of the absence of that in the church, or wishing to bury any fresh rumour under so impertinent a supposition, he gravely pronounced that the young man was certainly a necromancer; and that till the church could take cognisance of the affair, he would have the magician, whom they had thus detected, kept prisoner under the helmet itself, which he ordered his attendants to raise, and place the young man under it; declaring he should be kept there without food, with which his own infernal art might furnish him.

It was in vain for the youth to represent against this preposterous sentence: in vain did Manfred's friends en-

deavour to divert him from this savage and ill-grounded resolution. The generality were charmed with their lord's decision, which to their apprehensions carried great appearance of justice, as the magician was to be punished by the very instrument with which he had offended; nor were they struck with the least compunction at the probability of the youth being starved, for they firmly believed, that, by his diabolical skill, he could easily supply himself with nutriment.

Manfred thus saw his commands even cheerfully obeyed; and appointing a guard, with strict orders to prevent any food being conveyed to the prisoner, he dismissed his friends and attendants, and retired to his own chamber, after locking the gates of the castle, in which he suffered none but his domestics to remain.

In the mean time, the care and zeal of the young ladies had brought the Princess Hippolita to herself, who, amidst the transports of her own sorrow, frequently demanded news of her lord, would have dismissed her attendants to watch over him, and at last enjoined Matilda to leave her, and visit and comfort her father. Matilda, who wanted not affectionate duty to Manfred, though she trembled at his austerity, obeyed the orders of Hippolita, whom she tenderly recommended to Isabella; and enquiring of the domestics of her father, was informed that he was retired to his chamber, and had commanded that nobody should have admittance to him. Concluding that he was immersed in sorrow for the death of her brother, and fearing to renew his tears by the sight of his sole remaining child, she hesitated whether she should break in upon his affliction: yet solicitude for him, backed by the commands of her mother, encouraged her to venture disobeying the orders he had given; a fault she had never been guilty of before. The gentle timidity of her nature made her pause for some minutes at his door. She heard him traverse his chamber backwards and forwards with disordered steps; a mood which increased her apprehensions. She was however just going to beg admittance, when Manfred suddenly opened the door; and as it was now twilight, concurring with the disorder of his mind, he did not distinguish the person,

but asked angrily, who it was? Matilda replied, trembling, "My dearest father, it is I, your daughter."

Manfred, stepping back hastily, cried, "Begone, I do not want a daughter;" and, flinging back abruptly, clapped the door against the terrified Matilda.

She was too well acquainted with her father's impetuosity to venture a second intrusion. When she had a little recovered the shock of so bitter a reception, she wiped away her tears, to prevent the additional stab that the knowledge of it would give to Hippolita, who questioned her in the most anxious terms on the health of Manfred, and how he bore his loss. Matilda assured her he was well, and supported his misfortune with manly fortitude.

"But will he not let me see him?" said Hippolita, mournfully; "will he not permit me to blend my tears with his, and shed a mother's sorrows in the bosom of her lord? Or do you deceive me, Matilda? I know how Manfred doted on his son: is not the stroke too heavy for him? has he not sunk under it? You do not answer me: —alas! I dread the worst!—raise me, my maidens; I will, I will see my lord. Bear me to him instantly. He is dearer to me even than my children."

Matilda made signs to Isabella to prevent Hippolita's rising; and both those lovely young women were using their gentle violence to stop and calm the princess, when a servant, on the part of Manfred, arrived, and told Isabella that his lord demanded to speak with her.

"With me!" cried Isabella.

"Go," said Hippolita, relieved by a message from her lord: "Manfred cannot support the sight of his own family. He thinks you less disordered than we are, and dreads the shock of my grief. Console him, dear Isabella, and tell him I will smother my own anguish rather than add to his."

As it was now evening, the servant who conducted Isabella bore a torch before her. When they came to Manfred, who was walking impatiently about the gallery, he started, and said hastily,—

"Take away that light, and begone." Then shutting the door impetuously, he flung himself upon a bench

against the wall, and bade Isabella sit by him. She obeyed trembling.

"I sent for you, lady," said he, and then stopped, under great appearance of confusion.

"My lord!"

"Yes, I sent for you on a matter of great moment," resumed he: "dry your tears, young lady:—you have lost your bridegroom. Yes, cruel fate! and I have lost the hopes of my race! but Conrad was not worthy of your beauty."

"How! my lord," said Isabella; "sure you do not suspect me of not feeling the concern I ought! my duty and affection would have always——"

"Think no more of him," interrupted Manfred: "he was a sickly, puny child; and Heaven has perhaps taken him away, that I might not trust the honours of my house on so frail a foundation. The line of Manfred calls for numerous supports. My foolish fondness for that boy blinded the eyes of my prudence—but it is better as it is. I hope, in a few years, to have reason to rejoice at the death of Conrad."

Words cannot paint the astonishment of Isabella. At first she apprehended that grief had disordered Manfred's understanding. Her next thought suggested that this strange discourse was designed to ensnare her: she feared that Manfred had perceived her indifference for his son; and in consequence of that idea she replied,—

"Good my lord, do not doubt my tenderness: my heart would have accompanied my hand. Conrad would have engrossed all my care; and wherever fate shall dispose of me, I shall always cherish his memory, and regard your highness and the virtuous Hippolita as my parents."

"Curse on Hippolita!" cried Manfred: "forget her from this moment, as I do. In short, lady, you have missed a husband undeserving of your charms: they shall now be better disposed of. Instead of a sickly boy, you shall have a husband in the prime of his age, who will know how to value your beauties, and who may expect a numerous offspring."

"Alas! my lord," said Isabella, "my mind is too sadly

engrossed by the recent catastrophe in your family to think of another marriage. If ever my father returns, and it shall be his pleasure, I shall obey, as I did when I consented to give my hand to your son; but, until his return, permit me to remain under your hospitable roof, and employ the melancholy hours in assuaging yours, Hippolita's, and the fair Matilda's affliction."

"I desired you once before," said Manfred, angrily, "not to name that woman: from this hour she must be a stranger to you, as she must be to me: — in short, Isabella, since I cannot give you my son, I offer you myself."

"Heavens!" cried Isabella, waking from her delusion, "what do I hear? You, my lord! You! my father-in-law, the father of Conrad! the husband of the virtuous and tender Hippolita!"

"I tell you," said Manfred imperiously, "Hippolita is no longer my wife; I divorce her from this hour. Too long has she cursed me by her unfruitfulness. My fate depends on having sons, and this night I trust will give a new date to my hopes."

At those words he seized the cold hand of Isabella, who was half dead with fright and horror. She shrieked and started from him. Manfred rose to pursue her, when the moon, which was now up and gleamed in at the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet, which rose to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. Isabella, who gathered courage from her situation, and who dreaded nothing so much as Manfred's pursuit of his declaration, cried,—

"Look, my lord! see, Heaven itself declares against your impious intentions!"

"Heaven nor hell shall impede my designs," said Manfred, advancing again to seize the princess. At that instant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh, and heaved its breast. Isabella, whose back was turned to the

picture, saw not the motion, nor whence the sound came, but started, and said,—

"Hark, my lord! what sound was that?" and at the same time made towards the door. Manfred, distracted between the flight of Isabella, who had now reached the stairs, and yet unable to keep his eyes from the picture, which began to move, had, however, advanced some steps after her, still looking backwards on the portrait, when he saw it quit its panel, and descend on the floor with a grave and melancholy air.

"Do I dream?" cried Manfred, returning; "or are the devils themselves in league against me? Speak, infernal spectre! or, if thou art my grandsire, why dost thou, too, conspire against thy wretched descendant, who too dearly pays for——" Ere he could finish the sentence, the vision sighed again, and made a sign to Manfred to follow him.

"Lead on!" cried Manfred: "I will follow thee to the gulf of perdition." The spectre marched sedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right hand. Manfred accompanied him at a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped to with violence by an invisible hand. The prince, collecting courage from this delay, would have forcibly burst open the door with his foot, but found that it resisted his utmost efforts.

"Since hell will not satisfy my curiosity," said Manfred, "I will use the human means in my power for preserving my race; Isabella shall not escape me."

That lady, whose resolution had given way to terror the moment she had quitted Manfred, continued her flight to the bottom of the principal staircase. There she stopped, not knowing whither to direct her steps, nor how to escape from the impetuosity of the prince. The gates of the castle she knew were locked, and guards placed in the court. Should she, as her heart prompted her, go and prepare Hippolita for the cruel destiny that awaited her, she did not doubt but Manfred would seek her there, and that his violence would incite him to double the injury he

meditated, without leaving room for them to avoid the impetuosity of his passions. Delay might give him time to reflect on the horrid measures he had conceived, or produce some circumstance in her favour, if she could, for that night at least, avoid his odious purpose. Yet where conceal herself? how avoid the pursuit he would infallibly make throughout the castle? As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. Nicholas. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even Manfred's violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place; and she determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to shut herself up for ever among the holy virgins, whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this resolution, she seized a lamp that burned at the foot of the staircase, and hurried towards the secret passage.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; —yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her. She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave,—yet frequently stopped, and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled: she concluded it was Manfred. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind. She condemned her rash flight, which had thus exposed her to his rage in a place were her cries were not likely to draw any body to her assistance. Yet the sound seemed not to come from behind: if Manfred knew where she was, he must have followed her: she was still in one of the cloisters. and the steps she had heard were too distinct to

proceed from the way she had come. Cheered with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the prince, she was going to advance, when a door that stood ajar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently; but ere her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person retreated precipitately on seeing the light.

Isabella, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her dread of Manfred soon outweighed every other terror. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her, gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and conscious innocence made her hope that, unless sent by the prince's order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing, by what she could observe, that she was near the mouth of the subterraneous cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind, that met her at the door, extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the princess's situation. Alone, in so dismal a place, her mind impressed with all the terrible events of the day, hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crowded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair. At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door, and having found it, entered trembling into the vault from whence she had heard the sigh and steps. It gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonshine gleam from the roof of the vault, which seemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, she could not distinguish which, that appeared to have been crushed inwards. She advanced

eagerly towards this chasm, when she discerned a human form standing close against the wall.

She shrieked, believing it the ghost of her betrothed Conrad. The figure, advancing, said in a submissive voice, "Be not alarmed, lady, I will not injure you."

Isabella, a little encouraged by the words and tone of voice of the stranger, and recollecting that this must be the person who had opened the door, recovered her spirits enough to reply, "Sir, whoever you are, take pity on a wretched princess, standing on the brink of destruction: assist me to escape from this fatal castle, or, in a few moments, I may be made miserable for ever."

"Alas!" said the stranger, "what can I do to assist you? I will die in your defence; but I am unacquainted with the castle, and want ——"

"Oh!" said Isabella, hastily interrupting him, "help me but to find a trap-door that must be hereabout, and it is the greatest service you can do me, for I have not a minute to lose." Saying these words, she felt about on the pavement, and directed the stranger to search likewise, for a smooth piece of brass enclosed in one of the stones. "That," said she, "is the lock which opens with a spring, of which I know the secret. If we can find that, I may escape; if not, alas! courteous stranger, I fear I shall have involved you in my misfortunes. Manfred will suspect you for the accomplice of my flight, and you will fall a victim to his resentment."

"I value not my life," said the stranger; "and it will be some comfort to lose it, in trying to deliver you from his tyranny."

"Generous youth!" said Isabella, "how shall I ever requite ——"

As she uttered these words, a ray of moonshine, streaming through a cranny of the ruin above, shone directly on the lock they sought.—"Oh! transport!" said Isabella, "here is the trap-door;" and, taking out the key, she touched the spring, which, starting aside, discovered an iron ring. "Lift up the door," said the princess. The stranger obeyed; and beneath appeared some stone steps descending into a vault totally dark. "We must go down

here," said Isabella: "follow me; dark and dismal as it is, we cannot miss our way; it leads directly to the church of St. Nicholas — but, perhaps," added the princess, modestly, "you have no reason to leave the castle, nor have I farther occasion for your service; in a few minutes I shall be safe from Manfred's rage — only let me know to whom I am so much obliged."

"I will never quit you," said the stranger eagerly, "until I have placed you in safety — nor think me, princess, more generous than I am; though you are my principal care——"

The stranger was interrupted by a sudden noise of voices that seemed approaching, and they soon distinguished these words: — "Talk not to me of necromancers; I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of enchantment."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Isabella, "it is the voice of Manfred; make haste, or we are ruined! and shut the trap door after you." Saying this, she descended the steps precipitately; and, as the stranger hastened to follow her, he let the door slip out of his hands: it fell, and the spring closed over it. He tried in vain to open it, not having observed Isabella's method of touching the spring; nor had he many moments to make an essay. The noise of the falling door had been heard by Manfred, who, directed by the sound, hastened thither, attended by his servants with torches.

"It must be Isabella," cried Manfred, before he entered the vault: "she is escaping by the subterraneous passage, but she cannot have got far." What was the astonishment of the prince, when, instead of Isabella, the light of the torches discovered to him the young peasant, whom he thought confined under the fatal helmet. "Traitor!" said Manfred, "how camest thou here? I thought thee in durance above in the court."

"I am no traitor," replied the young man boldly, "nor am I answerable for your thoughts."

"Presumptuous villain!" cried Manfred, "dost thou provoke my wrath? Tell me; how hast thou escaped from above? Thou hast corrupted thy guards, and their lives shall answer it."

"My poverty," said the peasant calmly, "will disculpate them: though the ministers of a tyrant's wrath, to thee they are faithful, and but too willing to execute the orders which you unjustly imposed upon them."

"Art thou so hardy as to dare my vengeance?" said the prince; "but tortures shall force the truth from thee. Tell me; I will know thy accomplices."

"There was my accomplice!" said the youth, smiling and pointing to the roof.

Manfred ordered the torches to be held up, and perceived that one of the cheeks of the enchanted casque had forced its way through the pavement of the court, as his servants had let it fall over the peasant, and had broken through into the vault, leaving a gap through which the peasant had pressed himself some minutes before he was found by Isabella. "Was that the way by which thou didst descend?" said Manfred.

"It was," said the youth.

"But what noise was that," said Manfred, "which I heard, as I entered the cloister?"

"A door clapped," said the peasant; "I heard it as well as you."

"What door?" said Manfred hastily.

"I am not acquainted with your castle," said the peasant: "this is the first time I ever entered it; and this vault the only part of it within which I ever was."

"But I tell thee," said Manfred, wishing to find out if the youth had discovered the trap-door, "it was this way I heard the noise; my servants heard it too."

"My lord," interrupted one of them officiously, "to be sure it was the trap-door, and he was going to make his escape."

"Peace! blockhead," said the prince, angrily; "if he was going to escape, how should he come on this side? I will know from his own mouth what noise it was I heard. Tell me truly, thy life depends on thy veracity."

"My veracity is dearer to me than my life," said the peasant; "nor would I purchase the one by forfeiting the other."

"Indeed, young philosopher!" said Manfred, contemptuously; "tell me, then, what was that noise I heard?"

"Ask me, what I can answer," said he, "and put me to death instantly, if I tell you a lie."

Manfred, growing impatient at the steady valour and indifference of the youth, cried,—"Well then, thou man of truth! answer; was it the fall of the trap-door that I heard?"

"It was," said the youth.

"It was!" said the prince; "and how didst thou come to know there was a trap-door here?"

"I saw the plate of brass by a gleam of moonshine," replied he.

"But what told thee it was a lock?" said Manfred; "how didst thou discover the secret of opening it?"

"Providence, that delivered me from the helmet, was able to direct me to the spring of a lock," said he.

"Providence should have gone a little farther, and have placed thee out of the reach of my resentment," said Manfred: "when Providence had taught thee to open the lock, it abandoned thee for a fool, who did not know how to make use of its favours. Why didst thou not pursue the path pointed out for thy escape? Why didst thou shut the trap-door before thou hadst descended the steps?"

"I might ask you, my lord," said the peasant, "how I, totally unacquainted with your castle, was to know that those steps led to any outlet? but I scorn to evade your questions. Wherever those steps led to, perhaps, I should have explored the way. I could not be in a worse situation than I was. But the truth is, I let the trap-door fall: your immediate arrival followed. I had given the alarm—what imported it to me whether I was seized a minute sooner or a minute later?"

"Thou art a resolute villain for thy years," said Manfred; "yet, on reflection, I suspect thou dost but trifle with me: thou hast not yet told me how thou didst open the lock."

"That I will show you, my lord," said the peasant; and, taking up a fragment of stone that had fallen from above, he laid himself on the trap-door, and began to beat on the piece of brass that covered it; meaning to gain time for the escape of the princess. This presence of mind,

joined to the frankness of the youth, staggered Manfred. He even felt a disposition towards pardoning one who had been guilty of no crime. Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his passions did not obscure his reason.

While the prince was in this suspense, a confused noise of voices echoed through the distant vaults. As the sound approached, he distinguished the clamours of some of his domestics, whom he had dispersed through the castle in search of Isabella, calling out, "Where is my lord? where is the prince?"

"Here I am," said Manfred, as they came nearer; "have you found the princess?"

The first that arrived replied, "Oh, my lord, I am glad we have found you."

"Found me!" said Manfred; "have you found the princess?"

"We thought we had, my lord," said the fellow, looking terrified; "but——"

"But what?" cried the prince; "has she escaped?"

"Jaquez and I, my lord——"

"Yes, I and Diego," interrupted the second, who came up in still greater consternation.

"Speak one of you at a time," said Manfred; "I ask you, where is the princess?"

"We do not know," said they both together; "but we are frightened out of our wits."

"So I think, blockheads," said Manfred; "what is it has scared you thus?"

"Oh, my lord," said Jaquez, "Diego has seen such a sight! your highness would not believe your eyes."

"What new absurdity is this?" cried Manfred; "give me a direct answer, or by heaven——"

"Why, my lord, if it please your highness to hear me," said the poor fellow, "Diego and I——"

"Yes, I and Jaquez," cried his comrade.

"Did not I forbid you to speak both at a time?" said

the prince: "you, Jaquez, answer; for the other fool seems more distracted than thou art: what is the matter?"

"My gracious lord," said Jaquez, "if it please your highness to hear me. Diego and I, according to your highness's orders, went to search for the young lady; but being apprehensive that we might meet the ghost of my young lord, your highness's son, God rest his soul! as he has not received Christian burial——"

"Sot!" cried Manfred, in a rage, "is it only a ghost, then, that thou hast seen?"

"Oh, worse! worse! my lord," cried Diego: "I had rather have seen ten whole ghosts."

"Grant me patience!" said Manfred; "those blockheads distract me. Out of my sight, Diego; and thou, Jaquez, tell me, in one word, art thou sober? art thou raving? thou wast wont to have some sense; has the other sot frightened himself and thee too? speak; what is it he fancies he has seen?"

"Why, my lord," replied Jaquez, trembling, "I was going to tell your highness, that since the calamitous misfortune of my young lord, God rest his precious soul! not one of us, your highness's faithful servants, indeed we are, my lord, though poor men; I say, not one of us has dared to set a foot about the castle, but two together: so Diego and I, thinking that my young lady might be in the great gallery, went up there to look for her, and tell her your highness wanted something to impart to her."

"O blundering fools!" cried Manfred; "and in the mean time she has made her escape, because you were afraid of goblins! Why, thou knave! she left me in the gallery; I came from thence myself."

"For all that, she may be there still for aught I know," said Jaquez; "but the devil shall have me before I seek her there again: poor Diego! I do not believe he will ever recover it."

"Recover what?" said Manfred; "am I never to learn what it is has terrified these rascals? But I lose my time; follow me, slave; I will see if she is in the gallery."

"For heaven's sake, my dear good lord," cried Jaquez,

"do not go to the gallery! Satan himself, I believe, is in the chamber next to the gallery."

Manfred, who hitherto had treated the terror of his servants as an idle panic, was struck at this new circumstance. He recollected the apparition of the portrait, and the sudden closing of the door at the end of the gallery — his voice faltered, and he asked with disorder, "What is in the great chamber?"

"My lord," said Jaquez, "when Diego and I came into the gallery, he went first, for he said he had more courage than I; — so, when we came into the gallery, we found nobody. We looked under every bench and stool; and still we found nobody."

"Were all the pictures in their places?" said Manfred.

"Yes, my lord," answered Jaquez; "but we did not think of looking behind them."

"Well, well," said Manfred, "proceed."

"When we came to the door of the great chamber," continued Jaquez, "we found it shut."

"And could not you open it?" said Manfred.

"Oh yes, my lord; would to heaven we had not!" replied he: "nay, it was not I neither, it was Diego: he was grown fool-hardy, and would go on, though I advised him not: if ever I open a door that is shut again!"

"Trifle not," said Manfred, shuddering, "but tell me what you saw in the great chamber, on opening the door."

"I! my lord!" said Jaquez, "I saw nothing: I was behind Diego; but I heard the noise."

"Jaquez," said Manfred, in a solemn tone of voice; "tell me, I adjure thee by the souls of my ancestors, what was it thou sawest? what was it thou heardest?"

"It was Diego saw it my lord, it was not I," replied Jaquez; "I only heard the noise. Diego had no sooner opened the door, than he cried out, and ran back — I ran back too, and said, 'Is it the ghost?' — 'The ghost! no, no,' said Diego, and his hair stood an end — 'it is a giant, I believe: he is all clad in armour, for I saw his foot and part of his leg, and they are as large as the helmet below in the court.' As he said these words, my lord, we heard a violent motion, and the rattling of armour,

as if the giant was rising, for Diego has told me since that he believes the giant was lying down, for the foot and leg were stretched at length on the floor. Before we could get to the end of the gallery, we heard the door of the great chamber clap behind us, but we did not dare turn back to see if the giant was following us — yet, now I think on it, we must have heard him if he pursued us; but for heaven's sake, good my lord, send for the chaplain, and have the castle exorcised, for, for certain, it is enchanted."

"Ay, pray do, my lord," cried all the servants at once, "or we must leave your highness's service."

"Peace, dotards!" said Manfred, "and follow me; I will know what all this means."

"We! my lord?" cried they, with one voice; "we would not go up to the gallery for your highness's revenue."

The young peasant, who had stood silent, now spoke. "Will your highness," said he, "permit me to try this adventure? my life is of consequence to nobody; I fear no bad angel, and have offended no good one."

"Your behaviour is above your seeming," said Manfred, viewing him with surprise and admiration: "hereafter I will reward your bravery; but now," continued he with a sigh, "I am so circumstanced, that I dare trust no eyes but my own. However, I give you leave to accompany me."

Manfred, when he first followed Isabella from the gallery, had gone directly to the apartment of his wife, concluding the princess had retired thither. Hippolita, who knew his step, rose with anxious fondness to meet her lord, whom she had not seen since the death of her son. She would have flown in a transport, mixed of joy and grief, to his bosom, but he pushed her rudely off, and said, "Where is Isabella?"

"Isabella, my lord!" said the astonished Hippolita.

"Yes, Isabella," cried Manfred imperiously; "I want Isabella."

"My lord," replied Matilda, who perceived how much his behaviour had shocked her mother, "she has not been with us since your highness summoned her to your apartment."

"Tell me where she is," said the prince; "I do not want to know where she has been."

"My good lord," says Hippolita, "your daughter tells you the truth: Isabella left us by your command, and has not returned since; but, my good lord, compose yourself: retire to your rest; this dismal day has disordered you. Isabella shall wait your orders in the morning."

"What, then, you know where she is?" cried Manfred. "Tell me directly, for I will not lose an instant; and you, woman," speaking to his wife, "order your chaplain to attend me forthwith."

"Isabella," said Hippolita, calmly, "is retired, I suppose to her chamber: she is not accustomed to watch at this late hour. Gracious my lord," continued she, "let me know what has disturbed you. Has Isabella offended you?"

"Trouble me not with questions," said Manfred, "but tell me where she is."

"Matilda shall call her," said the princess. "Sit down, my lord, and resume your wonted fortitude."

"What! art thou jealous of Isabella?" replied he, "that you wish to be present at our interview?"

"Good heavens! my lord," said Hippolita; "what is it your highness means?"

"Thou wilt know ere many minutes are passed," said the cruel prince. "Send your chaplain to me, and wait my pleasure here." At these words he flung out of the room in search of Isabella, leaving the amazed ladies thunderstruck with his words and frantic deportment, and lost in vain conjectures on what he was meditating.

Manfred was now returning from the vault, attended by the peasant and a few of his servants, whom he had obliged to accompany him. He ascended the staircase without stopping, till he arrived at the gallery, at the door of which he met Hippolita and her chaplain. When Diego had been dismissed by Manfred, he had gone directly to the princess's apartment with the alarm of what he had seen. That excellent lady, who no more than Manfred doubted of the reality of the vision, yet affected to treat it as a delirium of the servants. Willing, however, to save her lord from any additional shock, and prepared by a series of grief not to tremble at any accession to it, she determined

to make herself the first sacrifice, if fate had marked the present hour for their destruction. Dismissing the reluctant Matilda to her rest, who in vain sued for leave to accompany her mother, and attended only by her chaplain, Hippolita had visited the gallery and great chamber; and now, with more serenity of soul than she had felt for many hours, she met her lord, and assured him that the vision of the gigantic leg and foot was all a fable; and no doubt an impression made by fear, and the dark and dismal hour of the night, on the minds of his servants. She and the chaplain had examined the chamber, and found every thing in the usual order.

Manfred, though persuaded, like his wife, that the vision had been no work of fancy, recovered a little from the tempest of mind into which so many strange events had thrown him. Ashamed, too, of his inhuman treatment of a princess, who returned every injury with new marks of tenderness and duty, he felt returning love forcing itself into his eyes; but not less ashamed of feeling remorse towards one against whom he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter outrage, he curbed the yearnings of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next transition of his soul was to exquisite villany. Presuming on the unshaken submission of Hippolita, he flattered himself that she would not only acquiesce with patience to a divorce, but would obey, if it was his pleasure, in endeavouring to persuade Isabella to give him her hand — but ere he could indulge this horrid hope, he reflected that Isabella was not to be found. Coming to himself, he gave orders that every avenue to the castle should be strictly guarded, and charged his domestics, on pain of their lives, to suffer nobody to pass out. The young peasant to whom he spoke favourably, he ordered to remain in a small chamber on the stairs, in which there was a pallet-bed, and the key of which he took away himself, telling the youth he would talk with him in the morning. Then dismissing his attendants, and bestowing a sullen kind of half-nod on Hippolita, he retired to his own chamber.

CHAPTER II.

Matilda, who, by Hippolita's order, had retired to her apartment, was ill-disposed to take any rest. The shocking fate of her brother had deeply affected her. She was surprised at not seeing Isabella; but the strange words which had fallen from her father, and his obscure menace to the princess, his wife, accompanied by the most furious behaviour, had filled her gentle mind with terror and alarm. She waited anxiously for the return of Bianca, a young damsel that attended her, whom she had sent to learn what was become of Isabella. Bianca soon appeared, and informed her mistress of what she had gathered from the servants, that Isabella was nowhere to be found. She related the adventure of the young peasant, who had been discovered in the vault, though with many simple additions from the incoherent accounts of the domestics; and she dwelt principally on the gigantic leg and foot which had been seen in the gallery-chamber. This last circumstance had terrified Bianca so much, that she was rejoiced when Matilda told her that she would not go to rest, but would watch till the princess should rise.

The young princess wearied herself in conjectures on the flight of Isabella, and on the threats of Manfred to her mother. "But what business could he have so urgent with the chaplain?" said Matilda. "Does he intend to have my brother's body interred privately in the chapel?"

"Oh, madam," said Bianca, "now I guess. As you are become his heiress, he is impatient to have you married. He has always been raving for more sons; I warrant he is now impatient for grandsons. As sure as I live, madam, I shall see you a bride at last. Good madam, you wo'n't cast off your faithful Bianca: you wo'n't put Donna Rossara over me, now you are a great princess!"

"My poor Bianca," said Matilda, "how fast your thoughts ramble! I a great princess! What hast thou seen in Manfred's behaviour since my brother's death that be-

speaks any increase of tenderness to me? No, Bianca; his heart was ever a stranger to me — but he is my father, and I must not complain. Nay, if Heaven shuts my father's heart against me, it overpays my little merit in the tenderness of my mother. — O that dear mother! Yes, Bianca, 't is there I feel the rugged temper of Manfred. I can support his harshness to me with patience; but it wounds my soul when I am witness to his causeless severity towards her."

"Oh, madam," said Bianca, "all men use their wives so, when they are weary of them."

"And yet you congratulated me but now," said Matilda, "when you fancied my father intended to dispose of me!"

"I would have you a great lady," replied Bianca, "come what will. I do not wish to see you moped in a convent, as you would be if you had your will, and if my lady, your mother, who knows that a bad husband is better than no husband at all, did not hinder you. — Bless me! what noise is that? St. Nicholas forgive me! I was but in jest."

"It is the wind," said Matilda, "whistling through the battlements in the tower above. You have heard it a thousand times."

"Nay," said Bianca, "there was no harm neither in what I said: it is no sin to talk of matrimony — and so, madam, as I was saying, if my Lord Manfred should offer you a handsome young prince for a bridegroom, you would drop him a courtesy, and tell him you would rather take the veil?"

"Thank Heaven! I am in no such danger," said Matilda: "you know how many proposals for me he has rejected."

"And you thank him, like a dutiful daughter, do you, madam? — but come, madam; suppose to-morrow morning he was to send for you to the great council-chamber, and there you should find at his elbow a lovely young prince, with large black eyes, a smooth white forehead, and manly curling locks like jet; in short, madam, a young hero resembling the picture of the good Alfonso in the gallery, which you sit and gaze at for hours together."

"Do not speak lightly of that picture," interrupted Ma-

tilda, sighing: "I know the adoration with which I look at that picture is uncommon—but I am not in love with a coloured panel. The character of that virtuous prince, the veneration with which my mother has inspired me for his memory, the orisons which, I know not why, she has enjoined me to pour forth at his tomb, all have concurred to persuade me that, somehow or other, my destiny is linked with something relating to him."

"Lord, madam! how should that be?" said Bianca: "I have always heard that your family was no way related to his; and I am sure I cannot conceive why my lady, the princess, sends you in a cold morning or a damp evening to pray at his tomb: he is no saint by the almanack. If you must pray, why does she not bid you address yourself to our great St. Nicholas? I am sure he is the saint I pray to for a husband."

"Perhaps my mind would be less affected," said Matilda, "if my mother would explain her reasons to me; but it is the mystery she observes, that inspires me with this—I know not what to call it. As she never acts from caprice, I am sure there is some fatal secret at bottom—nay, I know there is. In her agony of grief for my brother's death she dropped some words that intimated as much."

"Oh, dear madam," cried Bianca, "what were they?"

"No," said Matilda, "if a parent lets fall a word, and wishes it recalled, it is not for a child to utter it."

"What! was she sorry for what she had said?" asked Bianca. "I am sure, madam, you may trust me."

"With my own little secrets, when I have any, I may," said Matilda; "but never with my mother's. A child ought to have no ears or eyes, but as a parent directs."

"Well, to be sure, madam, you was born to be a saint," said Bianca, "and there is no resisting one's vocation: you will end in a convent at last. But there is my Lady Isabella would not be so reserved to me: she will let me talk to her of young men; and when a handsome cavalier has come to the castle, she has owned to me that she wished your brother Conrad resembled him."

"Bianca," said the princess, "I do not allow you to

mention my friend disrespectfully. Isabella is of a cheerful disposition, but her soul is as pure as virtue itself. She knows your idling, babbling humour, and perhaps has now and then encouraged it, to divert melancholy, and enliven the solitude in which my father keeps us."

"Blessed Mary!" said Bianca, starting, "there it is again! Dear madam, do you hear nothing? This castle is certainly haunted!"

"Peace!" said Matilda, "and listen! I did think I heard a voice—but it must be fancy; your terrors, I suppose, have infected me."

"Indeed! indeed! madam," said Bianca, half weeping with agony, "I am sure I heard a voice."

"Does any body lie in the chamber beneath?" said the princess.

"Nobody has dared to lie there," answered Bianca, "since the great astrologer, that was your brother's tutor, drowned himself. For certain, madam, his ghost and the young prince's are now met in the chamber below; for Heaven's sake let us fly to your mother's apartment!"

"I charge you not to stir," said Matilda. "If they are spirits in pain, we may ease their sufferings by questioning them. They can mean no hurt to us, for we have not injured them; and if they should, shall we be more safe in one chamber than in another? Reach me my beads; we will say a prayer, and then speak to them."

"Oh, dear lady, I would not speak to a ghost for the world," cried Bianca. As she said these words, they heard the casement of the little chamber below Matilda's open. They listened attentively, and in a few minutes thought they heard a person sing, but could not distinguish the words.

"This can be no evil spirit," said the princess, in a low voice: "it is undoubtedly one of the family—open the window, and we shall know the voice."

"I dare not, indeed, madam," said Bianca.

"Thou art a very fool," said Matilda, opening the window gently herself. The noise that the princess made was, however, heard by the person beneath, who stopped, and they concluded had heard the casement open.

"Is any body below?" said the princess: "if there is, speak."

"Yes," said an unknown voice.

"Who is it?" said Matilda.

"A stranger," replied the voice.

"What stranger?" said she, "and how didst thou come here at this unusual hour, when all the gates of the castle are locked?"

"I am not here willingly," answered the voice; "but pardon me, lady, if I have disturbed your rest: I knew not that I was overheard. Sleep had forsaken me: I left a restless couch, and came to waste the irksome hours with gazing on the fair approach of morning, impatient to be dismissed from this castle."

"Thy words and accents," said Matilda, "are of a melancholy cast: if thou art unhappy, I pity thee. If poverty afflicts thee, let me know it: I will mention thee to the princess, whose beneficent soul ever melts for the distressed; and she will relieve thee."

"I am, indeed, unhappy," said the stranger, "and I know not what wealth is; but I do not complain of the lot which Heaven has cast for me. I am young and healthy, and am not ashamed of owing my support to myself; yet think me not proud, or that I disdain your generous offers. I will remember you in my orisons, and I will pray for blessings on your gracious self and your noble mistress — if I sigh, lady, it is for others, not for myself."

"Now I have it, madam, said Bianca, whispering the princess. "This is certainly the young peasant; and, by my conscience, he is in love: — well, this is a charming adventure! Do, madam, let us sift him. He does not know you, but takes you for one of my Lady Hippolita's women."

"Art thou not ashamed, Bianca?" said the princess. "What right have we to pry into the secrets of this young man's heart? He seems virtuous and frank, and tells us he is unhappy. Are those circumstances that authorise us to make a property of him? How are we entitled to his confidence?"

"Lord! madam, how little you know of love!" re-

plied Bianca: "why lovers have no pleasure equal to talking of their mistress."

"And would you have me become a peasant's confidant?" said the princess.

"Well, then, let me talk to him," said Bianca: "though I have the honour of being your highness's maid of honour, I was not always so great. Besides, if love levels ranks, it raises them too: I have a respect for a young man in love."

"Peace, simpleton," said the princess. "Though he said he was unhappy, it does not follow that he must be in love. Think of all that has happened to-day, and tell me, if there are no misfortunes but what love causes.—Stranger, resumed the princess, if thy misfortunes have not been occasioned by thy own fault, and are within the compass of the Princess Hippolita's power to redress, I will take upon me to answer that she will be thy protectress. When thou art dismissed from this castle, repair to holy father Jerome, at the convent adjoining to the church of St. Nicholas, and make thy story known to him, as far as thou thinkest meet. He will not fail to inform the princess, who is the mother of all that want her assistance. Farewell! It is not seemly for me to hold farther converse with a man at this unwonted hour."

"May the saints guard thee, gracious lady!" replied the peasant; "but, oh! if a poor and worthless stranger might presume to beg a minute's audience farther—am I so happy?—the casement is not shut—might I venture to ask——"

"Speak quickly," said Matilda; "the morning dawns apace; should the labourers come into the fields and perceive us—what wouldst thou ask?"

"I know not how—I know not if I dare," said the young stranger, faltering; "yet the humanity with which you have spoken to me emboldens—lady, dare I trust you?"

"Heavens," said Matilda, "what dost thou mean? with what wouldst thou trust me—speak boldly, if thy secret is fit to be intrusted to a virtuous breast."

"I would ask," said the peasant, recollecting himself,

"whether what I have heard from the domestics is true, that the princess is missing from the castle?"

"What imports it to thee to know?" replied Matilda: "thy first words bespoke a prudent and becoming gravity. Dost thou come hither to pry into the secrets of Manfred? Adieu. I have been mistaken in thee." Saying these words, she shut the casement hastily, without giving the young man time to reply.

"I had acted more wisely," said the princess to Bianca, with some sharpness, "if I had let thee converse with this peasant: his inquisitiveness seems of a piece with thy own."

"It is not fit for me to argue with your highness," replied Bianca; "but perhaps the questions I should have put to him would have been more to the purpose than those you have been pleased to ask him."

"Oh, no doubt," said Matilda; "you are a very discreet personage! may I know what you would have asked him?"

"A by-stander often sees more of the game than those that play," answered Bianca. "Does your highness think, madam, that his question about my Lady Isabella was the result of mere curiosity? No, no, madam; there is more in it than you great folks are aware of. Lopez told me, that all the servants believe this young fellow contrived my Lady Isabella's escape — now, pray, madam, observe — you and I both know that my Lady Isabella never much fancied the prince your brother — well, he is killed just in the critical minute — I accuse nobody. A helmet falls from the moon — so my lord, your father, says; but Lopez and all the servants say, that this young spark is a magician, and stole it from Alfonso's tomb."

"Have done with this rhapsody of impertinence," said Matilda.

"Nay, madam, as you please," cried Bianca; "yet it is very particular, though, that my Lady Isabella should be missing the very same day, and that this young sorcerer should be found at the mouth of the trap-door — I accuse nobody — but if my young lord came honestly by his death ——"

"Dare not, on thy duty," said Matilda, "to breathe a suspicion on the purity of my dear Isabella's fame."

"Purity or not purity," said Bianca, "gone she is — a stranger is found that nobody knows. You question him yourself. He tells you he is in love, or unhappy, it is the same thing — nay, he owned he was unhappy about others; and is any body unhappy about another unless they are in love with them? and at the very next word he asks innocently, poor soul, if my Lady Isabella is missing."

"To be sure," said Matilda, "thy observations are not totally without foundation; Isabella's flight amazes me. The curiosity of the stranger is very particular; yet Isabella never concealed a thought from me."

"So she told you," said Bianca, "to fish out your secrets; but who knows, madam, but this stranger may be some prince in disguise? Do, madam, let me open the window, and ask him a few questions."

"No," replied Matilda, "I will ask him myself: if he knows aught of Isabella, he is not worthy that I should converse farther with him." She was going to open the casement, when they heard the bell ring at the postern gate of the castle, which is on the right hand of the tower where Matilda lay. This prevented the princess from renewing the conversation with the stranger.

After continuing silent for some time, "I am persuaded," said she to Bianca, "that whatever be the cause of Isabella's flight, it had no unworthy motive. If this stranger was accessory to it, she must be satisfied of his fidelity and worth. I observed, did not you, Bianca? that his words were tinctured with an uncommon infusion of piety. It was no ruffian's speech: his phrases were becoming a man of gentle birth."

"I told you, madam," said Bianca, "that I was sure he was some prince in disguise."

"Yet," said Matilda, "if he was privy to her escape, how will you account for his not accompanying her in her flight? Why expose himself unnecessarily and rashly to my father's resentment?"

"As for that, madam," replied she, "if he could get

from under the helmet, he will find ways of eluding your father's anger. I do not doubt but he has some talisman or other about him."

"You resolve every thing into magic," said Matilda; "but a man who has any intercourse with infernal spirits does not dare to make use of those tremendous and holy words which he uttered. Didst thou not observe with what fervour he vowed to remember me to Heaven in his prayers? yes; Isabella was undoubtedly convinced of his piety."

"Commend me to the piety of a young fellow and a damsel that consult to elope!" said Bianca. "No, no, madam; my Lady Isabella is of another guess mould than you take her for. She used, indeed, to sigh and lift up her eyes in your company, because she knows you are a saint; but when your back was turned ——"

"You wrong her," said Matilda. "Isabella is no hypocrite: she has a due sense of devotion, but never affected a call she has not. On the contrary, she always combated my inclination for the cloister; and though I own the mystery she has made to me of her flight confounds me — though it seems inconsistent with the friendship between us — I cannot forget the disinterested warmth with which she always opposed my taking the veil: she wished to see me married, though my dower would have been a loss to her and my brother's children. For her sake, I will believe well of this young peasant."

"Then you do think there is some liking between them?" said Bianca. While she was speaking, a servant came hastily into the chamber, and told the princess that the Lady Isabella was found.

"Where?" said Matilda.

"She has taken sanctuary in St. Nicholas's church," replied the servant: "Father Jerome has brought the news himself; he is below with his highness."

"Where is my mother?" said Matilda.

"She is in her own chamber, madam, and has ask d for you."

Manfred had risen at the first dawn of light, and gone to Hippolita's apartment, to enquire if she knew aught of

Isabella. While he was questioning her, word was brought that Jerome demanded to speak with him. Manfred, little suspecting the cause of the friar's arrival, and knowing he was employed by Hippolita in her charities, ordered him to be admitted, intending to leave them together, while he pursued his search after Isabella.

"Is your business with me or the princess?" said Manfred.

"With both," replied the holy man. "The Lady Isabella ——"

"What of her?" interrupted Manfred, eagerly.

"Is at St. Nicholas's altar," replied Jerome.

"That is no business of Hippolita's," said Manfred with confusion: "let us retire to my chamber, father, and inform me how she came thither."

"No, my lord," replied the good man with an air of firmness and authority, that daunted even the resolute Manfred, who could not help revering the saint-like virtues of Jerome, "my commission is to both; and, with your highness's good liking, in the presence of both, I shall deliver it: but first, my lord, I must interrogate the princess, whether she is acquainted with the cause of the Lady Isabella's retirement from your castle."

"No, on my soul," said Hippolita: "does Isabella charge me with being privy to it?"

"Father," interrupted Manfred, "I pay due reverence to your holy profession; but I am sovereign here, and will allow no meddling priest to interfere in the affairs of my domestic. If you have aught to say, attend me to my chamber. I do not use to let my wife be acquainted with the secret affairs of my state: they are not within a woman's province."

"My lord," said the holy man, "I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions. I forgive your highness's uncharitable apostrophe: I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than Manfred. Hearken to him who speaks through my organs."

Manfred trembled with rage and shame. Hippolita's countenance declared her astonishment and impatience to

know where this would end: her silence more strongly spoke her observance of Manfred.

"The Lady Isabella," resumed Jerome, "commends herself to both your highnesses: she thanks both for the kindness with which she has been treated in your castle: she deplores the loss of your son, and her own misfortune in not becoming the daughter of such wise and noble princes, whom she shall always respect as parents: she prays for uninterrupted union and felicity between you (Manfred's colour changed); but, as it is no longer possible for her to be allied to you, she entreats your consent to remain in sanctuary till she can learn news of her father, or, by the certainty of his death, be at liberty, by the approbation of her guardians, to dispose of herself in suitable marriage."

"I shall give no such consent," said the prince; "but insist on her return to the castle without delay: I am answerable for her person to her guardians, and will not brook her being in any hands but my own."

"Your highness will recollect whether that can any longer be proper," replied the friar.

"I want no monitor," said Manfred, colouring: "Isabella's conduct leaves room for strange suspicions; and that young villain, who was at least the accomplice of her flight, if not the cause of it ——"

"The cause!" interrupted Jerome; "was a *young* man the cause?"

"This is not to be borne!" cried Manfred. "Am I to be bearded in my own palace by an insolent monk? thou art privy, I guess, to their amours."

"I would pray to Heaven to clear up your uncharitable surmises," said Jerome, "if your highness were not satisfied in your conscience how unjustly you accuse me. I do pray to Heaven to pardon that uncharitableness; and I implore your highness to leave the princess at peace in that holy place, where she is not liable to be disturbed by such vain and worldly fantasies as discourses of love from any man."

"Cant not to me," said Manfred, "but return and bring the princess to her duty."

"It is my duty to prevent her return hither," said Jerome. "She is where orphans and virgins are safest from the snares and wiles of this world; and nothing but a parent's authority shall take her thence."

"I am her parent," cried Manfred, "and demand her."

"She wished to have you for her parent," said the friar: "but Heaven, that forbade that connection, has for ever dissolved all ties betwixt you: and I announce to your highness ——"

"Stop! audacious man," said Manfred, "and dread my displeasure."

"Holy father," said Hippolita, "it is your office to be no respecter of persons: you must speak as your duty prescribes; but it is my duty to hear nothing that it pleases not my lord I should hear. Attend the prince to his chamber. I will retire to my oratory, and pray to the blessed Virgin to inspire you with her holy counsels, and to restore the heart of my gracious lord to its wonted peace and gentleness."

"Excellent woman!" said the friar.—"My lord, I attend your pleasure."

Manfred, accompanied by the friar, passed to his own apartment, where, shutting the door, "I perceive, father," said he, "that Isabella has acquainted you with my purpose. Now hear my resolve, and obey. Reasons of state, most urgent reasons, my own and the safety of my people, demand that I should have a son. It is in vain to expect an heir from Hippolita; I have made choice of Isabella. You must bring her back, and you must do more. I know the influence you have with Hippolita: her conscience is in your hands. She is, I allow, a faultless woman: her soul is set on heaven, and scorns the little grandeur of this world: you can withdraw her from it entirely. Persuade her to consent to the dissolution of our marriage, and to retire into a monastery: she shall endow one if she will; and shall have the means of being as liberal to your order as she or you can wish. Thus you will divert the calamities that are hanging over our heads, and have the merit of saving the principality of Otranto from destruction. You are a prudent man, and,

though the warmth of my temper betrayed me into some unbecoming expressions, I honour your virtue, and wish to be indebted to you for the repose of my life and the preservation of my family."

"The will of Heaven be done," said the friar. "I am but its worthless instrument. It makes use of my tongue to tell thee, prince, of thy unwarrantable designs. The injuries of the virtuous Hippolita have mounted to the throne of pity. By me thou art reprimanded for thy adulterous intention of repudiating her: by me thou art warned not to pursue the incestuous design on thy contracted daughter. Heaven, that delivered her from thy fury, when the judgments so recently fallen on thy house ought to have inspired thee with other thoughts, will continue to watch over her. Even I, a poor and despised friar, am able to protect her from thy violence. I, sinner as I am, and uncharitably reviled by your highness as an accomplice of I know not what amours, scorn the allurements with which it has pleased thee to tempt mine honesty. I love my order; I honour devout souls; I respect the piety of thy princess; but I will not betray the confidence she reposes in me, nor serve even the cause of religion by foul and sinful compliances: but, forsooth, the welfare of the state depends on your highness having a son! Heaven mocks the short-sighted views of man. But yester-morn, whose house was so great, so flourishing as Manfred's? Where is young Conrad now? My lord, I respect your tears, but I mean not to check them: let them flow, prince! they will weigh more with Heaven towards the welfare of thy subjects, than a marriage which, founded on lust or policy, could never prosper. The sceptre which passed from the race of Alfonso to thine cannot be preserved by a match which the church will never allow. If it is the will of the Most High that Manfred's name must perish, resign yourself, my lord, to its decrees; and thus deserve a crown that can never pass away. Come, my lord, I like this sorrow; let us return to the princess; she is not apprised of your cruel intentions; nor did I mean more than to alarm you. You saw with what gentle patience, with what efforts of love, she heard, she rejected hearing,

the extent of your guilt. I know she longs to fold you in her arms, and assure you of her unalterable affection."

"Father," said the prince, "you mistake my compunction. True, I honour Hippolita's virtues; I think her a saint; and wish it were for my soul's health to tie faster the knot that has united us; but, alas, father, you know not the bitterest of my pangs; it is some time that I have had scruples on the legality of our union: Hippolita is related to me in the fourth degree — it is true, we had a dispensation: but I have been informed, that she had also been contracted to another. This it is that sits heavy at my heart; to this state of unlawful wedlock I impute the visitation that has fallen on me in the death of Conrad. Ease my conscience of this burden, dissolve our marriage, and accomplish the work of godliness which your divine exhortations have commenced in my soul."

How cutting was the anguish which the good man felt, when he perceived this turn in the wily prince. He trembled for Hippolita, whose ruin he saw was determined; and he feared if Manfred had no hope of recovering Isabella, that his impatience for a son would direct him to some other object who might not be equally proof against the temptation of Manfred's rank. For some time the holy man remained absorbed in thought. At length, conceiving some hopes from delay, he thought the wisest conduct would be to prevent the prince from despairing of recovering Isabella. Her the friar knew he could dispose, from her affection to Hippolita, and from the aversion she had expressed to him for Manfred's addresses, to second his views till the censures of the church could be fulminated against a divorce. With this intention, as if struck with the prince's scruples, he at length said, —

"My lord, I have been pondering on what your highness has said; and if in truth it is delicacy of conscience that is the real motive of your repugnance to your virtuous lady, far be it from me to endeavour to harden your heart. The church is an indulgent mother; unfold your griefs to her; she alone can administer comfort to your soul, either by satisfying your conscience, or, upon examination of your

scruples, by setting you at liberty, and indulging you in the lawful means of continuing your lineage. In the latter case, if the Lady Isabella can be brought to consent——"

Manfred, who concluded that he had either over-reached the good man, or that his first warmth had been but a tribute paid to appearance, was overjoyed at his sudden turn, and repeated the most magnificent promises, if he should succeed by the friar's mediation. The well-meaning priest suffered him to deceive himself, fully determined to traverse his views, instead of seconding them.

"Since we now understand one another," resumed the prince, "I expect, father, that you satisfy me in one point. Who is the youth that I found in the vault? He must have been privy to Isabella's flight. Tell me truly, is he her lover? or is he an agent for another's passion? I have often suspected Isabella's indifference to my son; a thousand circumstances crowd on my mind that confirm that suspicion. She herself was so conscious of it, that while I discoursed her in the gallery she outran my suspicions, and endeavoured to justify herself from coolness to Conrad."

The friar, who knew nothing of the youth, but what he had learnt occasionally from the princess, ignorant what was become of him, and not sufficiently reflecting on the impetuosity of Manfred's temper, conceived that it might not be amiss to sow the seeds of jealousy in his mind: they might be turned to some use hereafter, either by prejudicing the prince against Isabella, if he persisted in that union; or, by diverting his attention to a wrong scent, and employing his thoughts on a visionary intrigue, prevent his engaging in any new pursuit. With this unhappy policy, he answered in a manner to confirm Manfred in the belief of some connection between Isabella and the youth. The prince, whose passions wanted little fuel to throw them into a blaze, fell into a rage at the idea of what the friar had suggested.

"I will fathom to the bottom of this intrigue," cried he; and quitting Jerome abruptly, with a command to remain there till his return, he hastened to the great hall

of the castle, and ordered the peasant to be brought before him.

"Thou hardened young impostor," said the prince, as soon as he saw the youth; "what becomes of thy boasted veracity now? It was Providence, was it, and the light of the moon, that discovered the lock of the trap-door to thee? Tell me, audacious boy, who thou art, and how long thou hast been acquainted with the princess; and take care to answer with less equivocation than thou didst last night, or tortures shall wring the truth from thee."

The young man, perceiving that his share in the flight of the princess was discovered, and concluding that any thing he should say could no longer be of service or detriment to her, replied, "I am no impostor, my lord, nor have I deserved opprobrious language. I answered to every question your highness put to me last night with the same veracity that I shall speak now; and that will not be from fear of your tortures, but because my soul abhors a falsehood. Please to repeat your questions, my lord; I am ready to give you all the satisfaction in my power."

"You know my questions," replied the prince, "and only want time to prepare an evasion. Speak directly; who art thou, and how long hast thou been known to the princess?"

"I am a labourer at the next village," said the peasant; "my name is Theodore. The princess found me in the vault last night; before that hour I never was in her presence."

"I may believe as much or as little as I please of this," said Manfred; "but I will hear thy own story, before I examine into the truth of it. Tell me, what reason did the princess give thee for making her escape? Thy life depends on thy answer."

"She told me," replied Theodore, "that she was on the brink of destruction, and that if she could not escape from the castle, she was in danger in a few moments of being made miserable for ever."

"And on this slight foundation, on a silly girl's report," said Manfred, "thou didst hazard my displeasure!"

"I fear no man's displeasure," said Theodore, "when a woman in distress puts herself under my protection."

During this examination Matilda was going to the apartment of Hippolita. At the upper end of the hall, where Manfred sat, was a boarded gallery, with latticed windows, through which Matilda and Bianca were to pass. Hearing her father's voice, and seeing the servants assembled round him, she stopped to learn the occasion. The prisoner soon drew her attention: the steady and composed manner in which he answered, and the gallantry of his last reply, which were the first words she heard distinctly, interested her in his favour. His person was noble, handsome, and commanding, even in that situation, but his countenance soon engrossed her whole care.

"Heavens! Bianca, said the princess softly, do I dream, or is not that youth the exact resemblance of Alfonso's picture in the gallery?" She could say no more, for her father's voice grew louder at every word.

"This bravado," said he, "surpasses all thy former insolence. Thou shalt experience the wrath with which thou darest to trifle. Seize him," continued Manfred, "and bind him — the first news the princess hears of her champion shall be, that he has lost his head for her sake."

"The injustice of which thou art guilty towards me," said Theodore, "convinces me that I have done a good deed in delivering the princess from thy tyranny. May she be happy, whatever becomes of me!"

"This is a lover," cried Manfred, in a rage; "a peasant within sight of death is not animated by such sentiments. Tell me, tell me, rash boy, who thou art, or the rack shall force thy secret from thee."

"Thou hast threatened me with death already," said the youth, "for the truth I have told thee; if that is all the encouragement I am to expect for sincerity, I am not tempted to indulge thy vain curiosity farther."

"Then thou wilt not speak?" said Manfred.

"I will not," replied he.

"Bear him away into the court-yard," said Manfred; "I will see his head this instant severed from his body."

Matilda fainted at hearing those words. Bianca shrieked,

and cried, "Help, help! the princess is dead!" Manfred started at this ejaculation, and demanded what was the matter. The young peasant, who heard it too, was struck with horror, and asked eagerly the same question; but Manfred ordered him to be hurried into the court, and kept there for execution, till he had informed himself of the cause of Bianca's shrieks. When he learned the meaning, he treated it as a womanish panic, and ordering Matilda to be carried to her apartment, he rushed into the court, and calling for one of his guards, bade Theodore kneel down and prepare to receive the fatal blow.

The undaunted youth received the bitter sentence with a resignation that touched every heart but Manfred's. He wished earnestly to know the meaning of the words he had heard relating to the princess; but fearing to exasperate the tyrant more against her, he desisted. The only boon he deigned to ask was, that he might be permitted to have a confessor, and make his peace with Heaven. Manfred, who hoped by the confessor's means to come at the youth's history, readily granted his request; and being convinced that Father Jerome was now in his interest, he ordered him to be called and shrive the prisoner. The holy man, who had little foreseen the catastrophe that his imprudence occasioned, fell on his knees to the prince, and adjured him in the most solemn manner not to shed innocent blood. He accused himself in the bitterest terms for his indiscretion, endeavoured to exculpate the youth, and left no method untried to soften the tyrant's rage. Manfred, more incensed than appeased by Jerome's intercession, whose retraction now made him suspect he had been imposed upon by both, commanded the friar to do his duty, telling him he would not allow the prisoner many minutes for confession.

"Nor do I ask many, my lord," said the unhappy young man. "My sins, thank Heaven, have not been numerous; nor exceed what might be expected at my years. Dry your tears, good father, and let us despatch: this is a bad world; nor have I had cause to leave it with regret."

"Oh, wretched youth!" said Jerome, "how canst thou

bear the sight of me with patience? I am thy murderer! t is I have brought this dismal hour upon thee!"

"I forgive thee from my soul," said the youth, "as I hope Heaven will pardon me. Hear my confession, father, and give me thy blessing."

"How can I prepare thee for thy passage as I ought?" said Jerome. "Thou canst not be saved without pardoning thy foes, and canst thou forgive that impious man there?"

"I can," said Theodore; "I do."

"And does not this touch thee, cruel prince?" said the friar.

"I sent for thee to confess him," said Manfred, sternly; "not to plead for him. Thou didst first incense me against him; his blood be upon thy head."

"It will, it will!" said the good man, in an agony of sorrow. "Thou and I must never hope to go where this blessed youth is going."

"Despatch," said Manfred; "I am no more to be moved by the whining of priests than by the shrieks of women."

"What!" said the youth; "is it possible that my fate could have occasioned what I heard? Is the princess, then, again in thy power?"

"Thou dost but remember me of my wrath," said Manfred; "prepare thee, for this moment is thy last."

The youth, who felt his indignation rise, and who was touched with the sorrow which he saw he had infused into all the spectators, as well as into the friar, suppressed his emotions, and putting off his doublet, and unbuttoning his collar, knelt down to his prayers. As he stooped, his shirt slipped down below his shoulder, and discovered the mark of a bloody arrow.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried the holy man, starting, "what do I see? It is my child, my Theodore!"

The passions that ensued must be conceived; they cannot be painted. The tears of the assistants were suspended by wonder, rather than stopped by joy. They seemed to enquire into the eyes of their lord what they ought to feel. Surprise, doubt, tenderness, respect, succeeded each other in the countenance of the youth. He received with modest

submission the effusion of the old man's tears and embraces; yet, afraid of giving a loose to hope, and suspecting, from what had passed, the inflexibility of Manfred's temper, he cast a glance towards the prince, as if to say, canst thou be unmoved at such a scene as this?

Manfred's heart was capable of being touched. He forgot his anger in his astonishment; yet his pride forbade his owning himself affected. He even doubted whether this discovery was not a contrivance of the friar to save the youth. "What may this mean?" said he; "how can he be thy son? Is it consistent with thy profession or reputed sanctity to avow a peasant's offspring for the fruit of thy irregular amours?"

"Oh God!" said the holy man, "dost thou question his being mine? Could I feel the anguish I do, if I were not his father? Spare him, good prince! spare him! and revile me as thou pleasest."

"Spare him! spare him!" cried the attendants, "for this good man's sake."

"Peace!" said Manfred, sternly; "I must know, ere I am disposed to pardon. A saint's bastard may be no saint himself."

"Injurious lord!" said Theodore; "add not insult to cruelty. If I am this venerable man's son, though no prince, as thou art, know, the blood that flows in my veins ——"

"Yes," said the friar, interrupting him, "his blood is noble; nor is he that abject thing, my lord, you speak him. He is my lawful son; and Sicily can boast of few houses more ancient than that of Falconara — but, alas! my lord, what is blood? what is nobility? We are all reptiles, miserable, sinful creatures. It is piety alone that can distinguish us from the dust whence we sprung, and whither we must return."

"Truce to your sermon," said Manfred; "you forget you are no longer Friar Jerome, but the Count of Falconara. Let me know your history: you will have time enough to moralise hereafter, if you should not happen to obtain the grace of that sturdy criminal there."

"Mother of God!" said the friar, "is it possible my

lord can refuse a father the life of his only, his long-lost child? Trample me, my lord, scorn, afflict me, accept my life for his, but spare my son!"

"Thou canst feel, then," said Manfred, "what it is to lose an only son! A little hour ago thou didst preach up resignation to me: *my* house, if fate so pleased, must perish — but the Count of Falconara ——"

"Alas! my lord," said Jerome, "I confess I have offended; but aggravate not an old man's sufferings. I boast not of my family, nor think of such vanities; it is nature that pleads for this boy; it is the memory of the dear woman that bore him — is she, Theodore, is she dead?"

"Her soul has long been with the blessed," said Theodore.

"Oh! how?" cried Jerome; "tell me — no — she is happy! Thou art all my care now. Most dread lord! will you — will you grant me my poor boy's life?"

"Return to thy convent," answered Manfred; "conduct the princess hither; obey me in what else thou knowest, and I promise thee the life of thy son."

"Oh, my lord!" said Jerome, "is my honesty the price I must pay for this dear youth's safety?"

"For me!" cried Theodore; "let me die a thousand deaths, rather than stain thy conscience. What is it the tyrant would exact of thee? Is the princess still safe from his power? Protect her, thou venerable old man, and let all the weight of his wrath fall on me."

Jerome endeavoured to check the impetuosity of the youth; and ere Manfred could reply, the trampling of horses was heard, and a brazen trumpet, which hung without the gate of the castle, was suddenly sounded. At the same instant the sable plumes on the enchanted helmet, which still remained at the other end of the court, were tempestuously agitated, and nodded thrice, as if bowed by some invisible wearer.

CHAPTER III.

MANFRED's heart misgave him when he beheld the plumage on the miraculous casque shaken in concert with the sounding of the brazen trumpet. "Father," said he to Jerome, whom he now ceased to treat as Count of Falconara, "what mean these portents? If I have offended"—the plumes were shaken with greater violence than before. "Unhappy prince that I am!" cried Manfred. "Holy father, will you not assist me with your prayers?"

"My lord," replied Jerome, "Heaven is no doubt displeased with your mockery of its servants. Submit yourself to the church, and cease to persecute her ministers. Dismiss this innocent youth, and learn to respect the holy character I wear: Heaven will not be trifled with. You see" — the trumpet sounded again.

"I acknowledge I have been too hasty," said Manfred. "Father, do you go to the wicket, and demand who is at the gate."

"Do you grant me the life of Theodore?" replied the friar.

"I do," said Manfred; "but enquire who is without."

Jerome, falling on the neck of his son, discharged a flood of tears, that spoke the fulness of his soul.

"You promised to go to the gate," said Manfred.

"I thought," replied the friar, "your highness would excuse my thanking you first in this tribute of my heart."

"Go, dearest sir," said Theodore, "obey the prince; I do not deserve that you should delay his satisfaction for me."

Jerome, enquiring who was without, was answered, "A herald."

"From whom?" said he.

"From the Knight of the Gigantic Sabre," said the herald; "and I must speak with the usurper of Otranto."

Jerome returned to the prince, and did not fail to repeat the message in the very words it had been uttered. The

first sounds struck Manfred with terror; but when he heard himself styled usurper, his rage rekindled, and all his courage revived.

"Usurper! — insolent villain!" cried he; "who dares to question my title? Retire, father; this is no business for monks: I will meet this presumptuous man myself. Go to your convent, and prepare the princess's return; your son shall be a hostage for your fidelity: his life depends on your obedience."

"Good Heaven! my lord," cried Jerome, "your highness did but this instant freely pardon my child. Have you so soon forgot the interposition of Heaven?"

"Heaven," replied Manfred, "does not send heralds to question the title of a lawful prince. I doubt whether it even notifies its will through friars; but that is your affair, not mine. At present you know my pleasure; and it is not a saucy herald that shall save your son, if you do not return with the princess."

It was in vain for the holy man to reply. Manfred commanded him to be conducted to the postern gate, and shut out from the castle; and he ordered some of his attendants to carry Theodore to the top of the Black Tower, and guard him strictly, scarce permitting the father and son to exchange a hasty embrace at parting. He then withdrew to the hall, and seating himself in princely state, ordered the herald to be admitted to his presence.

"Well, thou insolent!" said the prince, "what wouldst thou with me?"

"I come," replied he, "to thee, Manfred, usurper of the principality of Otranto, from the renowned and invincible knight, the Knight of the Gigantic Sabre: in the name of his lord, Frederic Marquis of Vicenza, he demands the Lady Isabella, daughter of that prince, whom thou hast basely and traitorously got into thy power, by bribing her false guardians during his absence; and he requires thee to resign the principality of Otranto, which thou hast usurped from the said Lord Frederic, the nearest of blood to the last rightful lord, Alfonso the Good. If thou dost not instantly comply with these just demands,

he defies thee to single combat to the last extremity." And so saying, the herald cast down his warder.

"And where is this braggart who sends thee?" said Manfred.

"At the distance of a league," said the herald: "he comes to make good his lord's claim against thee, as he is a true knight, and thou an usurper and ravisher."

Injurious as this challenge was, Manfred reflected that it was not his interest to provoke the marquis. He knew how well founded the claim of Frederic was, nor was this the first time he had heard of it. Frederic's ancestors had assumed the style of Princes of Otranto, from the death of Alfonso the Good without issue; but Manfred, his father, and grandfather, had been too powerful for the house of Vicenza to dispossess them. Frederic, a martial and amorous young prince, had married a beautiful young lady, of whom he was enamoured, and who had died in childbed of Isabella. Her death affected him so much, that he had taken the cross and gone to the Holy Land, where he was wounded in an engagement against the infidels, made prisoner, and reported to be dead. When the news reached Manfred's ears, he bribed the guardians of the Lady Isabella to deliver her up to him as a bride for his son Conrad, by which alliance he had proposed to unite the claims of the two houses. This motive, on Conrad's death, had cooperated to make him so suddenly resolve on espousing her himself; and the same reflection determined him now to endeavour at obtaining the consent of Frederic to this marriage. A like policy inspired him with the thought of inviting Frederic's champion into his castle, lest he should be informed of Isabella's flight, which he strictly enjoined his domestics not to disclose to any of the knight's retinue.

"Herald," said Manfred, as soon as he had digested these reflections, "return to thy master, and tell him, ere we liquidate our differences by the sword, Manfred would hold some converse with him. Bid him welcome to my castle, where, by my faith, as I am a true knight, he shall have courteous reception, and full security for himself and followers. If we cannot adjust our quarrel by amicable means, I swear he shall depart in safety, and shall have

full satisfaction according to the laws of arms. So help me God and his Holy Trinity!" The herald made three obeisances, and retired.

During this interview, Jerome's mind was agitated by a thousand contrary passions. He trembled for the life of his son, and his first thought was to persuade Isabella to return to the castle. Yet he was scarce less alarmed at the thought of her union with Manfred. He dreaded Hippolita's unbounded submission to the will of her lord; and though he did not doubt but he could alarm her piety not to consent to a divorce, if he could get access to her, yet, should Manfred discover that the obstruction came from him, it might be equally fatal to Theodore. He was impatient to know whence came the herald, who, with so little management, had questioned the title of Manfred; yet he did not dare absent himself from the convent, lest Isabella should leave it, and her flight be imputed to him. He returned disconsolately to the monastery, uncertain on what conduct to resolve. A monk, who met him in the porch, and observed his melancholy air, said, "Alas! brother, is it then true that we have lost our excellent Princess Hippolita?"

The holy man started, and cried, "What meanest thou, brother? I came this instant from the castle, and left her in perfect health."

"Martelli," replied the other friar, "passed by the convent but a quarter of an hour ago, on his way from the castle, and reported that her highness was dead. All our brethren are gone to the chapel to pray for her happy transit to a better life, and willed me to wait thy arrival. They know thy holy attachment to that good lady, and are anxious for the affliction it will cause thee — indeed we have all reason to weep; she was a mother to our house. But this life is but a pilgrimage; we must not murmur — we shall all follow her: may our end be like hers!"

"Good brother, thou dreamest," said Jerome; "I tell thee I come from the castle, and left the princess well: — where is the Lady Isabella?"

"Poor gentlewoman," replied the friar, "I told her the sad news, and offered her spiritual comfort; I reminded

her of the transitory condition of mortality, and advised her to take the veil: I quoted the example of the holy Princess Sanchia of Arragon."

"Thy zeal was laudable," said Jerome, impatiently; "but at present it was unnecessary. Hippolita is well — at least I trust in the Lord she is; I heard nothing to the contrary — yet methinks, the prince's earnestness — well, brother, but where is the Lady Isabella?"

"I know not," said the friar: "she wept much, and said she would retire to her chamber."

Jerome left his comrade abruptly, and hastened to the princess, but she was not in her chamber. He enquired of the domestics of the convent, but could learn no news of her. He searched in vain throughout the monastery and the church, and despatched messengers round the neighbourhood, to get intelligence if she had been seen, but to no purpose. Nothing could equal the good man's perplexity. He judged that Isabella, suspecting Manfred of having precipitated his wife's death, had taken the alarm, and withdrawn herself to some more secret place of concealment. This new flight would probably carry the prince's fury to the height. The report of Hippolita's death, though it seemed almost incredible, increased his consternation; and though Isabella's escape bespoke her aversion of Manfred for a husband, Jerome could feel no comfort from it while it endangered the life of his son. He determined to return to the castle, and made several of his brethren accompany him, to attest his innocence to Manfred, and, if necessary, join their intercessions with his for Theodore.

The prince, in the mean time, had passed into the court, and ordered the gates of the castle to be flung open for the reception of the stranger knight and his train. In a few minutes the cavalcade arrived. First came two harbingers with wands; next a herald, followed by two pages and two trumpeters; then a hundred foot guards. These were attended by as many horse. After them fifty footmen, clothed in scarlet and black, the colours of the knight; then a led horse. Two heralds on each side of a gentleman on horseback, bearing a banner, with the arms of Vi-

cenza and Otranto quarterly — a circumstance that much offended Manfred, but he stifled his resentment. Two more pages; the knight's confessor telling his beads; fifty more footmen, clad as before; two knights habited in complete armour, their beavers down, comrades to the principal knight; the squires of the two knights, carrying their shields and devices; the knight's own squire; a hundred gentlemen bearing an enormous sword, and seeming to faint under the weight of it. The knight himself, on a chestnut steed, in complete armour, his lance in the rest, his face entirely concealed by his visor, which was surmounted by a large plume of scarlet and black feathers. Fifty foot guards, with drums and trumpets, closed the procession, which wheeled off to the right and left, to make room for the principal knight.

As soon as he approached the gate, he stopped; and the herald advancing, read again the words of the challenge. Manfred's eyes were fixed on the gigantic sword, and he scarce seemed to attend to the cartel; but his attention was soon diverted by a tempest of wind that rose behind him: he turned, and beheld the plumes of the enchanted helmet agitated in the same extraordinary manner as before. It required intrepidity like Manfred's not to sink under a concurrence of circumstances that seemed to announce his fate. Yet, scorning in the presence of strangers to betray the courage he had always manifested, he said boldly, —

"Sir Knight, whoever thou art, I bid thee welcome If thou art of mortal mould, thy valour shall meet its equal; and if thou art a true knight, thou wilt scorn to employ sorcery to carry thy point. Be these omens from heaven or hell, Manfred trusts to the righteousness of his cause, and to the aid of St. Nicholas, who has ever protected his house. Alight, Sir Knight, and repose thyself; to-morrow thou shalt have a fair field; and Heaven befriend the juster side!"

The knight made no reply, but, dismounting, was conducted by Manfred to the great hall of the castle. As they traversed the court, the knight stopped to gaze on the miraculous casque; and, kneeling down, seemed to pray inwardly for some minutes. Rising, he made a sign to

the prince to lead on. As soon as they entered the hall, Manfred proposed to the stranger to disarm, but the knight shook his head in token of refusal. "Sir Knight," said Manfred, "this is not courteous: but by my good faith I will not cross thee; nor shalt thou have cause to complain of the Prince of Otranto. No treachery is designed on my part; I hope none is intended on thine; here, take my gauge (giving him his ring), your friends and you shall enjoy the laws of hospitality. Rest here until refreshments are brought; I will but give orders for the accommodation of your train, and return to you."

The three knights bowed, as accepting his courtesy. Manfred directed the stranger's retinue to be conducted to an adjacent hospital, founded by the Princess Hippolita for the reception of pilgrims. As they made the circuit of the court to return towards the gate, the gigantic sword burst from the supporters, and falling to the ground opposite to the helmet, remained immovable. Manfred, almost hardened to preternatural appearances, surmounted the shock of this new prodigy; and returning to the hall, where by this time the feast was ready, he invited his silent guests to take their places. Manfred, however ill his heart was at ease, endeavoured to inspire the company with mirth. He put several questions to them, but was answered only by signs. They raised their visors but sufficiently to feed themselves, and that but sparingly.

"Sirs," said the prince, "ye are the first guests I ever treated within these walls, who scorned to hold any intercourse with me; nor has it oft been customary, I ween, for princes to hazard their state and dignity against strangers and mutes. You say you come in the name of Frederic of Vicenza; I have ever heard that he was a gallant and courteous knight; nor would he, I am bold to say, think it beneath him to mix in social converse with a prince who is his equal, and not unknown by deeds in arms.—Still ye are silent — well, be it as it may, by the laws of hospitality and chivalry, ye are masters under this roof: ye shall do your pleasure — but come, give me a goblet of wine; ye will not refuse to pledge me to the healths of your fair mistresses." The principal knight sighed and

crossed himself, and was rising from the board. "Sir Knight," said Manfred, "what I said was but in sport; I shall constrain you in nothing. Use your good liking; since mirth is not your mood, let us be sad. Business may hit your fancies better; let us withdraw, and hear if what I have to unfold may be better relished than the vain efforts I have made for your pastime."

Manfred then conducting the three knights into an inner chamber, shut the door, and inviting them to be seated, began thus, addressing himself to the chief personage: —

"You come, Sir Knight, as I understand, in the name of the Marquis of Vicenza, to re-demand the Lady Isabella, his daughter, who has been contracted, in the face of holy church, to my son, by the consent of her legal guardians; and to require me to resign my dominions to your lord, who gives himself for the nearest of blood to Prince Alfonso, whose soul God rest! I shall speak to the latter article of your demands first. You must know, your lord knows, that I enjoy the principality of Otranto from my father Don Manuel, as he received it from his father Don Ricardo. Alfonso, their predecessor, dying childless in the Holy Land, bequeathed his estates to my grandfather, Don Ricardo, in consideration of his faithful services."—The stranger shook his head.—"Sir Knight," said Manfred, warmly, "Ricardo was a valiant and upright man; he was a pious man; witness his munificent foundation of the adjoining church and two convents. He was peculiarly patronised by St. Nicholas — my grandfather was incapable — I say, sir, Don Ricardo was incapable — excuse me, your interruption has disordered me. — I venerate the memory of my grandfather. — Well! sirs, he held this estate; he held it by his good sword and by the favour of St. Nicholas — so did my father; and so, sirs, will I, come what come will. — But Frederic, your lord, is nearest in blood. — I have consented to put my title to the issue of the sword — does that imply a vicious title? — I might have asked, where is Frederic, your lord? Report speaks him dead in captivity. You say, your actions say, he lives — I question it not — I might, sirs, I might, but I do not. Other princes would bid Frederic take his inheritance by force, if he can: they

would not stake their dignity on a single combat: they would not submit it to the decision of unknown mutes! — Pardon me, gentlemen, I am too warm; but suppose yourselves in my situation: as ye are stout knights, would it not move your choler to have your own and the honour of your ancestors called in question? — But to the point: ye require me to deliver up the Lady Isabella. — Sirs, I must ask if ye are authorised to receive her?" — The knight nodded. —"Receive her!" continued Manfred; "well, you are authorised to receive her — but, gentle knight, may I ask if you have full powers?" — The knight nodded. — "'T is well," said Manfred. "Then hear what I have to offer. — Ye see, gentlemen, before you the most unhappy of men (he began to weep); afford me your compassion; I am entitled to it; indeed I am. Know, I have lost my only hope, my joy, the support of my house — Conrad died yester-morning." — The knights discovered signs of surprise. — "Yes, sirs, fate has disposed of my son. Isabella is at liberty."

"Do you then restore her?" cried the chief knight, breaking silence.

"Afford me your patience," said Manfred. "I rejoice to find, by this testimony of your good-will, that this matter may be adjusted without bloodshed. It is no interest of mine dictates what little I have farther to say. Ye behold in me a man disgusted with the world; the loss of my son has weaned me from earthly cares. Power and greatness have no longer any charms in my eyes. I wished to transmit the sceptre I had received from my ancestors with honour to my son — but that is over! Life itself is so indifferent to me, that I accepted your defiance with joy: a good knight cannot go to the grave with more satisfaction than when falling in his vocation. Whatever is the will of Heaven I submit; for, alas! sirs, I am a man of many sorrows. Manfred is no object of envy — but no doubt you are acquainted with my story." — The knight made signs of ignorance, and seemed curious to have Manfred proceed. — "Is it possible, sirs," continued the prince, "that my story should be a secret to you? Have you heard nothing relating to me and the Princess Hippolita?" — They shook their heads. — "No! thus then, sirs, it is. You think me ambitious:

ambition, alas! is composed of more rugged materials. If I were ambitious, I should not for so many years have been a prey to all the hell of conscientious scruples — but I weary your patience: I will be brief. Know, then, that I have long been troubled in mind on my union with the Princess Hippolita. — Oh, sirs, if ye were acquainted with that excellent woman! if ye knew that I adore her like a mistress, and cherish her as a friend — but man was not born for perfect happiness! She shares my scruples, and with her consent I have brought this matter before the church, for we are related within the forbidden degrees. I expect every hour the definitive sentence that must separate us for ever — I am sure you feel for me — I see you do — pardon these tears!" — The knights gazed on each other, wondering where this would end. Manfred continued: — "The death of my son betiding while my soul was under this anxiety, I thought of nothing but resigning my dominions, and retiring for ever from the sight of mankind. My only difficulty was to fix on a successor, who would be tender of my people, and to dispose of the Lady Isabella, who is dear to me as my own blood. I was willing to restore the line of Alfonso, even in his most distant kindred; and though, pardon me, I am satisfied it was his will that Ricardo's lineage should take place of his own relations, yet where was I to search for those relations? I knew of none but Frederic, your lord: he was a captive to the infidels, or dead; and were he living, and at home, would he quit the flourishing state of Vicenza for the inconsiderable principality of Otranto? If he would not, could I bear the thought of seeing a hard unfeeling viceroy set over my poor faithful people? — for, sirs, I love my people, and, thank Heaven, am beloved by them. But ye will ask, whither tends this long discourse? briefly, then, thus, sirs. Heaven in your arrival seems to point out a remedy for these difficulties and my misfortunes. The Lady Isabella is at liberty; I shall soon be so — I would submit to any thing for the good of my people — were it not the best, the only way to extinguish the feuds between our families, if I was to take the Lady Isabella to wife — you start — but though Hippolita's virtues will ever be dear to me, a

prince must not consider himself; he is born for his people." —A servant at that instant entering the chamber, apprised Manfred that Jerome and several of his brethren demanded immediate access to him.

The prince, provoked at this interruption, and fearing that the friar would discover to the strangers that Isabella had taken sanctuary, was going to forbid Jerome's entrance. But recollecting that he was certainly arrived to notify the princess's return, Manfred began to excuse himself to the knights for leaving them for a few moments, but was prevented by the arrival of the friars. Manfred angrily reprimanded them for their intrusion, and would have forced them back from the chamber; but Jerome was too much agitated to be repulsed. He declared aloud the flight of Isabella, with protestations of his own innocence. Manfred, distracted at the news, and not less at its coming to the knowledge of the strangers, uttered nothing but incoherent sentences, now upbraiding the friar, now apologising to the knights; earnest to know what was become of Isabella, yet equally afraid of their knowing; impatient to pursue her, yet dreading to have them join in the pursuit. He offered to despatch messengers in quest of her, — but the chief knight, no longer keeping silence, reproached Manfred in bitter terms for his dark and ambiguous dealing, and demanded the cause of Isabella's first absence from the castle. Manfred, casting a stern look at Jerome, implying a command of silence, pretended that on Conrad's death he had placed her in sanctuary until he could determine how to dispose of her. Jerome, who trembled for his son's life, did not dare contradict this falsehood, but one of his brethren, not under the same anxiety, declared frankly that she had fled to their church in the preceding night. The prince in vain endeavoured to stop this discovery, which overwhelmed him with shame and confusion. The principal stranger, amazed at the contradictions he heard, and more than half persuaded that Manfred had secreted the princess, notwithstanding the concern he expressed at her flight, rushing to the door, said, — "Thou traitor-prince! Isabella shall be found." Manfred endeavoured to hold him, but the other knights assisting their

comrade, he broke from the prince, and hastened into the court, demanding his attendants. Manfred, finding it vain to divert him from the pursuit, offered to accompany him; and summoning his attendants, and taking Jerome and some of the friars to guide them, they issued from the castle; Manfred privately giving orders to have the knight's company secured, while to the knight he affected to despatch a messenger to require their assistance.

The company had no sooner quitted the castle, than Matilda, who felt herself deeply interested for the young peasant, since she had seen him condemned to death in the hall, and whose thoughts had been taken up with concerting measures to save him, was informed by some of the female attendants that Manfred had despatched all his men various ways in pursuit of Isabella. He had in his hurry given this order in general terms, not meaning to extend it to the guard he had set upon Theodore, but forgetting it. The domestics, officious to obey so peremptory a prince, and urged by their own curiosity and love of novelty to join in any precipitate chase, had to a man left the castle. Matilda disengaged herself from her women, stole up to the Black Tower, and unbolting the door, presented herself to the astonished Theodore. "Young man," said she, "though filial duty and womanly modesty condemn the step I am taking, yet holy charity, surmounting all other ties, justifies this act. Fly; the doors of thy prison are open; my father and his domestics are absent; but they may soon return; begone in safety; and may the angels of heaven direct thy course!"

"Thou art surely one of those angels!" said the enraptured Theodore: "none but a blessed saint could speak, could act, could look like thee! May I not know the name of my divine protectress? Methought thou namedst thy father: is it possible? can Manfred's blood feel holy pity? Lovely lady, thou answerest not — but how art thou here thyself? why dost thou neglect thy own safety, and waste a thought on a wretch like Theodore? Let us fly together. The life thou bestowest shall be dedicated to thy defence."

"Alas! thou mistakest," said Matilda, sighing: "I am Manfred's daughter, but no dangers await me."

"Amazement!" said Theodore; "but last night I blessed myself for yielding thee the service thy gracious compassion so charitably returns me now."

"Still thou art in error," said the princess; "but this is no time for explanation. Fly, virtuous youth, while it is in my power to save thee. Should my father return, thou and I both should indeed have cause to tremble."

"How?" said Theodore, "thinkest thou, charming maid, that I will accept of life at the hazard of aught calamitous to thee? better I endure a thousand deaths."

"I run no risk," said Matilda, "but by thy delay. Depart; it cannot be known that I assisted thy flight."

"Swear by the saints above, said Theodore, that thou canst not be suspected; else here I vow to wait whatever can befall me."

"Oh, thou art too generous," said Matilda; "but rest assured that no suspicion can alight on me."

"Give me thy beauteous hand in token that thou dost not deceive me," said Theodore; "and let me bathe it with the warm tears of gratitude."

"Forbear," said the princess; "this must not be."

"Alas!" said Theodore, "I have never known but calamity until this hour — perhaps shall never know other fortune again: suffer the chaste raptures of holy gratitude: 'tis my soul would print its effusions on thy hand."

"Forbear, and be gone," said Matilda; "how would Isabella approve of seeing thee at my feet?"

"Who is Isabella?" said the young man with surprise.

"Ah me! I fear," said the princess, "I am serving a deceitful one; — hast thou forgot thy curiosity this morning?"

"Thy looks, thy actions, all thy beauteous self, seem an emanation of divinity," said Theodore; "but thy words are dark and mysterious: — speak, lady; speak to thy servant's comprehension."

"Thou understandest but too well!" said Matilda. "But once more, I command thee to be gone: thy blood, which I may preserve, will be on my head, if I waste the time in vain discourse."

"I go, lady," said Theodore, "because it is thy will, and because I would not bring the grey hairs of my father with sorrow to the grave. Say but, adored lady, that I have thy gentle pity."

"Stay," said Matilda; "I will conduct thee to the subterraneous vault by which Isabella escaped; it will lead thee to the church of St. Nicholas, where thou mayest take sanctuary."

"What!" said Theodore, "was it another, and not thy lovely self, that I assisted to find the subterraneous passage?"

"It was," said Matilda; "but ask no more; I tremble to see thee still abide here: fly to the sanctuary."

"To sanctuary!" said Theodore; "no, princess, sanctuaries are for helpless damsels, or for criminals. Theodore's soul is free from guilt, nor will wear the appearance of it. Give me a sword, lady, and thy father shall learn that Theodore scorns an ignominious flight."

"Rash youth!" said Matilda, "thou wouldst not dare to lift thy presumptuous arm against the Prince of Otranto?"

"Not against thy father; indeed, I dare not," said Theodore: "excuse me, lady; I had forgotten — but could I gaze on thee, and remember thou art sprung from the tyrant Manfred? — but he is thy father, and from this moment my injuries are buried in oblivion." A deep and hollow groan, which seemed to come from above, startled the princess and Theodore. "Good Heaven! we are overheard!" said the princess. They listened, but perceived no farther noise: they both concluded it the effect of pent-up vapours. And the princess, preceding Theodore softly, carried him to her father's armoury, where equipping him with a complete suit, he was conducted by Matilda to the postern-gate.

"Avoid the town," said the princess, "and all the western side of the castle: 'tis there the search must be making by Manfred and the strangers; but hie thee to the opposite quarter. Yonder, behind that forest to the east, is a chain of rocks, hollowed into a labyrinth of caverns that reach to the sea-coast. There thou mayest lie concealed till thou canst make signs to some vessel to put on shore and take thee off. Go; Heaven be thy guide! — and

sometimes in thy prayers remember—Matilda!" Theodore flung himself at her feet; and seizing her lily hand, which with struggles she suffered him to kiss, he vowed on the earliest opportunity to get himself knighted, and fervently entreated her permission to swear himself eternally her knight. Ere the princess could reply, a clap of thunder was suddenly heard that shook the battlements. Theodore, regardless of the tempest, would have urged his suit, but the princess, dismayed, retreated hastily into the castle, and commanded the youth to be gone with an air that would not be disobeyed. He sighed and retired, but with eyes fixed on the gate until Matilda closing it, put an end to an interview in which the hearts of both had drunk so deeply of a passion, which both now tasted for the first time.

Theodore went pensively to the convent, to acquaint his father with his deliverance. There he learned the absence of Jerome, and the pursuit that was making after the Lady Isabella, with some particulars of whose story he now first became acquainted. The generous gallantry of his nature prompted him to wish to assist her; but the monks could lend him no lights to guess at the route she had taken. He was not tempted to wander far in search of her, for the idea of Matilda had imprinted itself so strongly on his heart, that he could not bear to absent himself at much distance from her abode. The tenderness Jerome had expressed for him concurred to confirm this reluctance; and he even persuaded himself that filial affection was the chief cause of his hovering between the castle and monastery, until Jerome should return at night. Theodore at length determined to repair to the forest that Matilda had pointed out to him. Arriving there, he sought the gloomiest shades, as best suited to the pleasing melancholy that reigned in his mind. In this mood he roved insensibly to the caves which had formerly served as a retreat to hermits, and were now reported round the country to be haunted by evil spirits. He recollected to have heard this tradition; and being of a brave and adventurous disposition, he willingly indulged his curiosity in exploring the secret recesses of this labyrinth. He had

not penetrated far before he thought he heard the steps of some person who seemed to retreat before him. Theodore, though firmly grounded in all our holy faith enjoins to be believed, had no apprehension that good men were abandoned without cause to the malice of the powers of darkness. He thought the place more likely to be infested by robbers than by those infernal agents who are reported to molest and bewilder travellers. He had long burned with impatience to approve his valour: drawing his sabre, he marched sedately onwards, still directing his steps, as the imperfect rustling sound before him led the way. The armour he were was a like indication to the person who avoided him. Theodore, now convinced that he was not mistaken, redoubled his pace, and evidently gained on the person that fled, whose haste increasing, Theodore came up just as a woman fell breathless before him. He hasted to raise her; but her terror was so great that he apprehended she would faint in his arms. He used every gentle word to dispel her alarms, and assured her that, far from injuring, he would defend her at the peril of his life. The lady recovering her spirits from his courteous demeanour, and gazing on his person, said, "Sure, I have heard that voice before!"

"Not to my knowledge," replied Theodore, "unless, as I conjecture, thou art the Lady Isabella."

"Merciful Heaven!" cried she, "thou art not sent in quest of me, art thou?" And saying these words she threw herself at his feet, and besought him not to deliver her up to Manfred.

"To Manfred!" cried Theodore; "no, lady, I have once already delivered thee from his tyranny, and it shall fare hard with me now, but I will place thee out of the reach of his daring."

"Is it possible," said she, "that thou shouldst be the generous unknown whom I met last night in the vault of the castle? Sure thou art not a mortal, but my guardian angel. On my knees let me thank ——"

"Hold, gentle princess," said Theodore, "nor demean thyself before a poor and friendless young man. If Heaven

has selected me for thy deliverer, it will accomplish its work, and strengthen my arm in thy cause: but come, lady, we are too near the mouth of the cavern; let us seek its inmost recesses; I can have no tranquillity till I have placed thee beyond the reach of danger."

"Alas, what mean you, sir?" said she. "Though all your actions are noble, though your sentiments speak the purity of your soul, is it fitting that I should accompany you alone in these perplexed retreats? should we be found together, what would a censorious world think of my conduct?"

"I respect your virtuous delicacy," said Theodore; "nor do you harbour a suspicion that wounds my honour. I meant to conduct you into the most private cavity of these rocks, and then, at the hazard of my life, to guard their entrance against every living thing. Besides, lady," continued he, drawing a deep sigh, "beauteous and all perfect as your form is, and though my wishes are not guiltless of aspiring, know, my soul is dedicated to another; and although ——" A sudden noise prevented Theodore from proceeding. They soon distinguished these sounds, "Isabella! what ho! Isabella!"

The trembling princess relapsed into her former agony of fear. Theodore endeavoured to encourage her, but in vain. He assured her he would rather die than suffer her to return under Manfred's power, and begging her to remain concealed, he went forth to prevent the person in search of her from approaching.

At the mouth of the cavern he found an armed knight discoursing with a peasant, who assured him he had seen a lady enter the passes of the rock. The knight was preparing to seek her, when Theodore, placing himself in his way, with his sword drawn, sternly forbade him at his peril to advance.

"And who art thou who darest to cross my way?" said the knight haughtily.

"One who does not dare more than he will perform," said Theodore.

"I seek the Lady Isabella," said the knight, "and understand she has taken refuge among these rocks. Im-

pede me not, or thou wilt repent having provoked my resentment."

"Thy purpose is as odious as thy resentment is contemptible," said Theodore: "return whence thou camest, or we shall soon know whose resentment is most terrible."

The stranger, who was the principal knight that had arrived from the Marquis of Vicenza, had galloped from Manfred as he was busied in getting information of the princess, and giving various orders to prevent her falling into the power of the three knights. Their chief had suspected Manfred of being privy to the princess's absconding; and this insult from a man who, he concluded, was stationed by that prince to secrete her, confirming his suspicions, he made no reply, but discharging a blow with his sabre at Theodore, would soon have removed all obstruction, if Theodore, who took him for one of Manfred's captains, and who had no sooner given the provocation than he prepared to support it, had not received the stroke on his shield. The valour that had so long been smothered in his breast broke forth at once; he rushed impetuously on the knight, whose pride and wrath were not less powerful incentives to hardy deeds. The combat was furious, but not long: Theodore wounded the knight in three several places, and at last disarmed him, as he fainted by the loss of blood. The peasant, who had fled on the first onset, had given the alarm to some of Manfred's domestics, who, by his orders, were dispersed through the forest in pursuit of Isabella. They came up as the knight fell, whom they soon discovered to be the noble stranger. Theodore, notwithstanding his hatred to Manfred, could not behold the victory he had gained without emotions of pity and generosity. But he was more touched when he learned the quality of his adversary, and was informed that he was no retainer, but an enemy of Manfred. He assisted the servants of the latter in disarming the knight, and in endeavouring to stanch the blood that flowed from his wounds. The knight recovering his speech, said, in a faint and faltering voice, "Generous foe, we have both been in an error: I took thee for an instrument of the tyrant: I per-

ceive thou hast made the like mistake: it is too late for excuses — I faint — if Isabella is at hand, call her; I have important secrets to ——"

"He is dying," said one of the attendants; "has nobody a crucifix about them? Andrea, do thou pray over him."

"Fetch some water," said Theodore, "and pour it down his throat, while I hasten to the princess." Saying this, he flew to Isabella, and in few words told her modestly, that he had been so unfortunate by mistake as to wound a gentleman from her father's court, who wished, ere he died, to impart something of consequence to her. The princess, who had been transported at hearing the voice of Theodore, as he called to her to come forth, was astonished at what she heard. Suffering herself to be conducted by Theodore, the new proof of whose valour recalled her dispersed spirits, she came where the bleeding knight lay speechless on the ground — but her fears returned when she beheld the domestics of Manfred. She would again have fled, if Theodore had not made her observe that they were unarmed, and had not threatened them with instant death if they should dare to seize the princess. The stranger, opening his eyes, and beholding a woman, said, "Art thou — pray tell me truly — art thou Isabella of Vicenza?"

"I am," said she. "Good Heaven restore thee!"

"Then thou —— then thou ——" said the knight, struggling for utterance, "seest — thy father. Give me one ——"

"Oh, amazement! horror! what do I hear? what do I see?" cried Isabella. "My father! you my father! how came you here, sir? for Heaven's sake speak! — Oh, run for help, or he will expire!"

"'Tis most true," said the wounded knight, exerting all his force; "I am Frederic thy father — yes, I came to deliver thee — it will not be — give me a parting kiss, and take ——"

"Sir," said Theodore, "do not exhaust yourself: suffer us to convey you to the castle."

"To the castle!" said Isabella; "is there no help nearer than the castle? would you expose my father to the

tyrant? if he goes thither, I cannot accompany him — and yet, can I leave him?"

"My child," said Frederic, "it matters not to me whither I am carried: a few minutes will place me beyond danger — but while I have eyes to dote on thee, forsake me not, dear Isabella! This brave knight, I know not who he is, will protect thy innocence. — Sir, you will not abandon my child, will you?"

Theodore, shedding tears over his victim, and vowing to guard the princess at the expense of his life, persuaded Frederic to suffer himself to be conducted to the castle. They placed him on a horse belonging to one of the domestics, after binding up his wounds as well as they were able. Theodore marched by his side, and the afflicted Isabella, who could not bear to quit him, followed mournfully behind.

CHAPTER IV.

The sorrowful troop no sooner arrived at the castle than they were met by Hippolita and Matilda, whom Isabella had sent one of the domestics before to advertise of their approach. The ladies causing Frederic to be conveyed into the nearest chamber, retired, while the surgeons examined his wounds. Matilda blushed at seeing Theodore and Isabella together; but endeavoured to conceal it by embracing the latter, and condoling with her on her father's mischance. The surgeons soon came to acquaint Hippolita that none of the marquis's wounds were dangerous, and that he was desirous of seeing his daughter and the princesses. Theodore, under pretence of expressing his joy at being freed from his apprehensions of the combat being fatal to Frederic, could not resist the impulse of following Matilda. Her eyes were so often cast down on meeting his, that Isabella, who regarded Theodore as attentively as he gazed on Matilda, soon divined who the object was that

he had told her in the cave engaged his affections. While this mute scene passed, Hippolita demanded of Frederic the cause of his having taken that mysterious course for reclaiming his daughter; and threw in various apologies to excuse her lord for the match contracted between their children. Frederic, however incensed against Manfred, was not insensible to the courtesy and benevolence of Hippolita; but he was still more struck with the lovely form of Matilda. Wishing to detain them by his bedside, he informed Hippolita of his story. He told her, that, while prisoner to the infidel, he had dreamed that his daughter, of whom he had learned no news since his captivity, was detained in a castle, where she was in danger of the most dreadful misfortunes; and that if he obtained his liberty, and repaired to a wood near Joppa, he would learn more. Alarmed at this dream, and incapable of obeying the direction given by it, his chains became more grievous than ever. But while his thoughts were occupied on the means of obtaining his liberty, he received the agreeable news that the confederate princes, who were warring in Palestine, had paid his ransom. He instantly set out for the wood that had been marked in his dream. For three days he and his attendants had wandered in the forest without seeing a human form; but on the evening of the third they came to a cell, in which they found a venerable hermit in the agonies of death. Applying rich cordials, they brought the saint-like man to his speech. "My sons," said he, "I am bounden to your charity — but it is in vain — I am going to my eternal rest — yet I die with the satisfaction of performing the will of Heaven. When first I repaired to this solitude, after seeing my country become a prey to unbelievers — it is, alas! above fifty years since I was witness to that dreadful scene — St. Nicholas appeared to me, and revealed a secret, which he bade me never disclose to mortal man, but on my death-bed. This is that tremendous hour, and ye are no doubt the chosen warriors to whom I was ordered to reveal my trust. As soon as ye have done the last offices to this wretched corse, dig under the seventh tree on the left hand of this poor cave, and your pains will —— Oh, good Heaven, receive my

soul!" With those words the devout man breathed his last.

"By break of day," continued Frederic, "when we had committed the holy relics to earth, we dug according to direction; but what was our astonishment, when, about the depth of six feet, we discovered an enormous sabre—the very weapon yonder in the court. On the blade, which was then partly out of the scabbard, though since closed by our efforts in removing it, were written the following lines—no; excuse me, madam," added the marquis, turning to Hippolita, "if I forbear to repeat them: I respect your sex and rank, and would not be guilty of offending your ear with sounds injurious to aught that is dear to you."

He paused—Hippolita trembled. She did not doubt but Frederic was destined by Heaven to accomplish the fate that seemed to threaten her house. Looking with anxious fondness at Matilda, a silent tear stole down her cheek; but recollecting herself, she said, "Proceed, my lord, Heaven does nothing in vain; mortals must receive its divine behests with lowliness and submission. It is our part to deprecate its wrath, or bow to its decrees. Repeat the sentence, my lord; we listen resigned."

Frederic was grieved that he had proceeded so far. The dignity and patient firmness of Hippolita penetrated him with respect; and the tender, silent affection with which the princess and her daughter regarded each other melted him almost to tears. Yet apprehensive that his forbearance to obey would be more alarming, he repeated, in a faltering and low voice, the following lines:—

> Where'er a casque that suits this sword is found,
> With perils is thy daughter compass'd round;
> Alfonso's blood alone can save the maid,
> And quiet a long restless prince's shade.

"What is there in these lines," said Theodore, impatiently, "that affects these princesses? Why were they to be shocked by a mysterious delicacy, that has so little foundation?"

"Your words are rude, young man," said the marquis; "and though fortune has favoured you once——"

"My honoured lord," said Isabella, who resented

Theodore's warmth, which she perceived was dictated by his sentiments for Matilda, "discompose not yourself for the glozing of a peasant's son: he forgets the reverence he owes you; but he is not accustomed——"

Hippolita, concerned at the heat that had arisen, checked Theodore for his boldness, but with an air acknowledging his zeal; and changing the conversation, demanded of Frederic where he had left her lord?

As the marquis was going to reply, they heard a noise without, and rising to enquire the cause, Manfred, Jerome, and part of the troop, who had met an imperfect rumour of what had happened, entered the chamber. Manfred advanced hastily towards Frederic's bed to condole with him on his misfortune, and to learn the circumstances of the combat, when, starting in an agony of terror and amazement, he cried,—

"Ah! what art thou? Thou dreadful spectre! Is my hour come?"

"My dearest, gracious lord," cried Hippolita, clasping him in her arms, "what is it you see? Why do you fix your eyeballs thus?"

"What," cried Manfred, breathless, "dost thou see nothing, Hippolita? Is this ghastly phantom sent to me alone—to me, who did not——"

"For mercy's sweetest self, my lord," said Hippolita, "resume your soul, command your reason; there are none here, but us, your friends."

"What, is not that Alfonso?" cried Manfred; "dost thou not see him? Can it be my brain's delirium?"

"This! my lord," said Hippolita: "this is Theodore, the youth who has been so unfortunate."

"Theodore," said Manfred mournfully, and striking his forehead—"Theodore, or a phantom, he has unhinged the soul of Manfred. But how comes he here? and how comes he in armour?"

"I believe he went in search of Isabella," said Hippolita.

"Of Isabella," said Manfred, relapsing into rage. "Yes, yes, that is not doubtful—but how did he escape from durance, in which I left him? Was it Isabella, or this hypocritical old friar, that procured his enlargement?"

"And would a parent be criminal, my lord," said Theodore, "if he meditated the deliverance of his child?"

Jerome, amazed to hear himself in a manner accused by his son, and without foundation, knew not what to think. He could not comprehend how Theodore had escaped, —how he came to be armed, and to encounter Frederic. Still he would not venture to ask any questions that might tend to inflame Manfred's wrath against his son. Jerome's silence convinced Manfred that he had contrived Theodore's release.

"And is it thus, thou ungrateful old man," said the prince, addressing himself to the friar, "that thou repayest mine and Hippolita's bounties? And not content with traversing my heart's nearest wishes, thou armest thy bastard, and bringest him into my own castle to insult me!"

"My lord," said Theodore, "you wrong my father: nor he nor I are capable of harbouring a thought against your peace. Is it insolence thus to surrender myself to your highness's pleasure?" added he, laying his sword respectfully at Manfred's feet. "Behold my bosom; strike, my lord, if you suspect that a disloyal thought is lodged there. There is not a sentiment engraven on my heart that does not venerate you and yours."

The grace and fervour with which Theodore uttered these words interested every person present in his favour. Even Manfred was touched; yet still possessed with his resemblance to Alfonso, his admiration was dashed with secret horror.

"Rise," said he; "thy life is not my present purpose. But tell me thy history, and how thou camest connected with this old traitor here."

"My lord——" said Jerome, eagerly.

"Peace! impostor," said Manfred; "I will not have him prompted."

"My lord," said Theodore, "I want no assistance: my story is very brief. I was carried at five years of age to Algiers with my mother, who had been taken by corsairs from the coast of Sicily. She died of grief in less than a twelvemonth." The tears gushed from Jerome's eyes, on whose countenance a thousand anxious passions stood ex-

pressed. "Before she died," continued Theodore, "she bound a writing about my arm under my garments, which told me I was the son of the Count Falconara."

"It is most true," said Jerome; "I am that wretched father."

"Again I enjoin thee silence," said Manfred. "Proceed."

"I remained in slavery," said Theodore, "until within these two years; when, attending on my master in his cruises, I was delivered by a Christian vessel which overpowered the pirate; and discovering myself to the captain, he generously put me on shore in Sicily:—but, alas! instead of finding a father, I learned that his estate, which was situated on the coast, had, during his absence, been laid waste by the rover, who had carried my mother and me into captivity; that his castle had been burnt to the ground, and that my father, on his return, had sold what remained, and was retired into religion in the kingdom of Naples, but where, no man could inform me. Destitute and friendless, hopeless almost of attaining the transport of a parent's embrace, I took the first opportunity of setting sail for Naples; from whence, within these six days, I wandered into this province, still supporting myself by the labour of my hands: nor until yester-morn did I believe that Heaven had reserved any lot for me but peace of mind and contented poverty. This, my lord, is Theodore's story. I am blessed beyond my hope in finding a father; I am unfortunate beyond my desert in having incurred your highness's displeasure."

He ceased. A murmur of approbation gently arose from the audience.

"This is not all," said Frederic: "I am bound in honour to add what he suppresses. Though he is modest, I must be generous—he is one of the bravest youths on Christian ground. He is warm too; and from the short knowledge I have of him, I will pledge myself for his veracity; if what he reports of himself were not true, he would not utter it.—And for me, youth, I honour a frankness which becomes thy birth. But now, and thou didst offend me; yet the noble blood which flows in thy veins may well be allowed to boil out, when it has so recently

traced itself to its source.—Come, my lord," turning to Manfred, "if I can pardon him, surely you may: it is not the youth's fault, if you took him for a spectre."

This bitter taunt galled the soul of Manfred. "If beings from another world," replied he haughtily, "have power to impress my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do: nor could a stripling's arm——"

"My lord," interrupted Hippolita, "your guest has occasion for repose: shall we not leave him to his rest?" Saying this, and taking Manfred by the hand, she took leave of Frederic, and led the company forth. The prince, not sorry to quit a conversation which recalled to mind the discovery he had made of his most secret sensations, suffered himself to be conducted to his own apartment, after permitting Theodore, though under engagement to return to the castle on the morrow (a condition the young man gladly accepted), to retire with his father to the convent. Matilda and Isabella were too much occupied with their own reflections, and too little content with each other, to wish for farther converse that night. They separated, each to her chamber, with more expressions of ceremony and fewer of affection than had passed between them since their childhood.

If they parted with small cordiality, they did but meet with greater impatience, as soon as the sun was risen. Their minds were in a situation that excluded sleep, and each recollected a thousand questions which she wished she had put to the other over night. Matilda reflected that Isabella had been twice delivered by Theodore in very critical situations, which she could not believe accidental. His eyes, it was true, had been fixed on her in Frederic's chamber; but that might have been to disguise his passion for Isabella from the fathers of both. It were better to clear this up. She wished to know the truth, lest she should wrong her friend by entertaining a passion for Isabella's lover. Thus jealousy prompted, and at the same time borrowed, an excuse from friendship to justify its curiosity.

Isabella, not less restless, had better foundation for her suspicions. Both Theodore's tongue and eyes had told her

his heart was engaged—it was true—yet perhaps Matilda might not correspond to his passion; she had ever appeared insensible to love: all her thoughts were set on heaven. "Why did I dissuade her?" said Isabella to herself: "I am punished for my generosity; but when did they meet? where? It cannot be. I have deceived myself; perhaps last night was the first time they ever beheld each other; it must be some other object that has prepossessed his affections. If it is, I am not so unhappy as I thought; if it is not my friend Matilda—how! can I stoop to wish for the affection of a man who rudely and unnecessarily acquainted me with his indifference? and that at the very moment in which common courtesy demanded at least expressions of civility? I will go to my dear Matilda, who will confirm me in this becoming pride—man is false—I will advise with her on taking the veil: she will rejoice to find me in this disposition; and I will acquaint her that I no longer oppose her inclination for the cloister." In this frame of mind, and determined to open her heart entirely to Matilda, she went to that princess's chamber, whom she found already dressed, and leaning pensively on her arm. This attitude, so correspondent to what she felt herself, revived Isabella's suspicions, and destroyed the confidence she had purposed to place in her friend. They blushed at meeting, and were too much motives to disguise their sensations with address. After some unmeaning questions and replies, Matilda demanded of Isabella the cause of her flight. The latter, who had almost forgotten Manfred's passion, so entirely was she occupied by her own, concluding that Matilda referred to her last escape from the convent, which had occasioned the events of the preceding evening, replied, "Martelli brought word to the convent that your mother was dead——"

"Oh!" said Matilda, interrupting her, "Bianci has explained that mistake to me: on seeing me faint, she cried out, 'The princess is dead;' and Martelli, who had come for the usual dole to the castle——"

"And what made you faint?" said Isabella, indifferent to the rest.

Matilda blushed, and stammered, "My father—he was sitting in judgment on a criminal."

"What criminal?" said Isabella, eagerly.

"A young man," said Matilda:—"I believe—I think it was that young man that——"

"What, Theodore?" said Isabella.

"Yes," answered she; "I never saw him before; I do not know how he had offended my father—but as he has been of service to you, I am glad my lord has pardoned him."

"Served me!" replied Isabella; "do you term it serving me, to wound my father, and almost occasion his death? Though it is but since yesterday that I am blessed with knowing a parent, I hope Matilda does not think I am such a stranger to filial tenderness as not to resent the boldness of that audacious youth, and that it is impossible for me ever to feel any affection for one who dared to lift his arm against the author of my being. No, Matilda, my heart abhors him; and if you still retain the friendship for me that you have vowed from your infancy, you will detest the man who has been on the point of making me miserable for ever."

Matilda held down her head, and replied, "I hope my dearest Isabella does not doubt her Matilda's friendship: I never beheld that youth until yesterday; he is almost a stranger to me: but as the surgeons have pronounced your father out of danger, you ought not to harbour uncharitable resentment against one, who, I am persuaded, did not know the marquis was related to you."

"You plead his cause very pathetically," said Isabella, "considering he is so much a stranger to you! I am mistaken, or he returns your charity."

"What mean you?" said Matilda.

"Nothing," said Isabella, repenting that she had given Matilda a hint of Theodore's inclination for her. Then, changing the discourse, she asked Matilda what occasioned Manfred to take Theodore for a spectre?

"Bless me," said Matilda, "did you not observe his extreme resemblance to the portrait of Alfonso in the gallery? I took notice of it to Bianca even before I saw him

in armour; but with the helmet on he is the very image of that picture."

"I do not much observe pictures," said Isabella: "much less have I examined this young man so attentively as you seem to have done. Ah, Matilda, your heart is in danger; but let me warn you as a friend—he has owned to me that he is in love; it cannot be with you, for yesterday was the first time you ever met—was it not?"

"Certainly," replied Matilda; "but why does my dearest Isabella conclude from any thing I have said, that"—she paused—then continuing: "he saw you first, and I am far from having the vanity to think that my little portion of charms could engage a heart devoted to you—may you be happy, Isabella, whatever is the fate of Matilda!"

"My lovely friend," said Isabella, whose heart was too honest to resist a kind expression, "it is you that Theodore admires; I saw it; I am persuaded of it; nor shall a thought of my own happiness suffer me to interfere with yours." This frankness drew tears from the gentle Matilda; and jealousy, that for a moment had raised a coolness between these amiable maidens, soon gave way to the natural sincerity and candour of their souls. Each confessed to the other the impression that Theodore had made on her; and this confidence was followed by a struggle of generosity, each insisting on yielding her claim to her friend. At length the dignity of Isabella's virtue reminding her of the preference which Theodore had almost declared for her rival, made her determine to conquer her passion, and cede the beloved object to her friend."

During this contest of amity, Hippolita entered her daughter's chamber.

"Madam," said she to Isabella, "you have so much tenderness for Matilda, and interest yourself so kindly in whatever affects our wretched house, that I can have no secrets with my child which are not proper for you to hear." The princesses were all attention and anxiety.

"Know then, madam," continued Hippolita, "and you, my dearest Matilda, that being convinced by all the events of these two last ominous days that Heaven purposes the

sceptre of Otranto should pass from Manfred's hands into those of the Marquis Frederic; I have been perhaps inspired with the thought of averting our total destruction by the union of our rival houses. With this view I have been proposing to Manfred, my lord, to tender this dear, dear child to Frederic your father."

"Me to lord Frederic!" cried Matilda. "Good heavens! my gracious mother, and have you named it to my father?"

"I have," said Hippolita: "he listened benignly to my proposal, and is gone to break it to the marquis."

"Ah! wretched princess," cried Isabella, "what hast thou done? what ruin has thy inadvertent goodness been preparing for thyself, for me, and for Matilda!"

"Ruin from me, to you, and to my child!" said Hippolita; "what can this mean?"

"Alas!" said Isabella, "the purity of your own heart prevents your seeing the depravity of others. Manfred, your lord, that impious man——"

"Hold!" said Hippolita, "you must not, in my presence, young lady, mention Manfred with disrespect; he is my lord and husband, and——"

"Will not long be so," said Isabella, "if his wicked purposes can be carried into execution."

"This language amazes me," said Hippolita. "Your feeling, Isabella, is warm: but until this hour I never knew it betray you into intemperance. What deed of Manfred authorises you to treat him as a murderer, an assassin?"

"Thou virtuous, and too credulous princess!" replied Isabella; "it is not thy life he aims at—it is to separate himself from thee! to divorce thee! to——"

"To divorce me!"

"To divorce my mother!" cried Hippolita and Matilda at once.

"Yes," said Isabella; "and, to complete his crime, he meditates—I cannot speak it!"

"What can surpass what thou hast already uttered?" said Matilda.

Hippolita was silent. Grief choked her speech; and

the recollection of Manfred's late ambiguous discourses confirmed what she heard.

"Excellent, dear lady!—madam! mother!" cried Isabella, flinging herself at Hippolita's feet in a transport of passion; "trust me, believe me, I will die a thousand deaths sooner than consent to injure you, than yield to so odious——"

"Oh, this is too much!" cried Hippolita. "What crimes does one crime suggest! Rise, dear Isabella; I do not doubt your virtue. Oh, Matilda, this stroke is too heavy for thee! weep not, my child; and not a murmur, I charge thee. Remember, he is *thy* father still!"

"But you are my mother, too," said Matilda, fervently; "and *you* are virtuous, *you* are guiltless! Oh, must not I, must not I complain?"

"You must not," said Hippolita; "come, all will be well. Manfred, in the agony for the loss of thy brother, knew not what he said; perhaps Isabella misunderstood him: his heart is good—and, my child, thou knowest not all. There is a destiny hangs over us: the hand of Providence is stretched out. Oh, could I but save thee from the wreck.—Yes," continued she, in a firmer tone, "perhaps the sacrifice of myself may atone for all; I will go and offer myself to this divorce—it boots not what becomes of me. I will withdraw into the neighbouring monastery, and waste the remainder of life in prayers and tears for my child and—the prince."

"Thou art as much too good for this world," said Isabella, "as Manfred is execrable—but think not, lady, that thy weakness shall determine for me. I swear, hear me all ye angels——"

"Stop, I adjure thee," cried Hippolita: "remember thou dost not depend on thyself; thou hast a father——"

"My father is too pious, too noble," interrupted Isabella, "to command an impious deed. But should he command it; can a father enjoin a cursed act? I was contracted to the son, can I wed the father?—No, madam, no; force should not drag me to Manfred's hated bed. I loath him, I abhor him: divine and human laws forbid; and, my friend, my dearest Matilda, would I wound her

tender soul by injuring her adored mother? my own mother—I never have known another."

"Oh, she is the mother of both," cried Matilda: "can we, can we, Isabella, adore her too much?"

"My lovely children," said the touched Hippolita, "your tenderness overpowers me; but I must not give way to it. It is not ours to make election for ourselves; Heaven, our fathers, and our husbands, must decide for us. Have patience until you hear what Manfred and Frederic have determined. If the marquis accepts Matilda's hand, I know she will readily obey. Heaven may interpose and prevent the rest. What means my child?" continued she, seeing Matilda fall at her feet with a flood of speechless tears.—"But no; answer me not, my daughter; I must not hear a word against the pleasure of thy father."

"Oh, doubt not my obedience, my dreadful obedience to him and to you!" said Matilda. "But can I, most respected of women, can I experience all this tenderness, this world of goodness, and conceal a thought from the best of mothers?"

"What art thou going to utter?" said Isabella, trembling. "Recollect thyself, Matilda."

"No, Isabella," said the princess, "I should not deserve this incomparable parent, if the inmost recesses of my soul harboured a thought without her permission—nay, I have offended her; I have suffered a passion to enter my heart without her avowal; but here I disclaim it; here I vow to heaven and her ——"

"My child! my child!" said Hippolita, "what words are these? what new calamities has fate in store for us? Thou, a passion! Thou, in this hour of destruction!"

"Oh, I see all my guilt," said Matilda. "I abhor myself, if I cost my mother a pang: she is the dearest thing I have on earth. Oh, I will never, never behold him more!"

"Isabella," said Hippolita, "thou art conscious to this unhappy secret, whatever it is. Speak!"

"What!" cried Matilda, "have I so forfeited my

mother's love, that she will not permit me even to speak my own guilt? Oh, wretched, wretched Matilda!"

"Thou art too cruel," said Isabella to Hippolita; "canst thou behold this anguish of a virtuous mind, and not commiserate it?"

"Not pity my child!" said Hippolita, catching Matilda in her arms. "Oh, I know she is good; she is all virtue, all tenderness and duty. I do forgive thee, my excellent, my only hope!"

The princesses then revealed to Hippolita their mutual inclination for Theodore, and the purpose of Isabella to resign him to Matilda. Hippolita blamed their imprudence, and showed them the improbability that either father would consent to bestow his heiress on so poor a man, though nobly born. Some comfort it gave her to find their passion of so recent a date, and that Theodore had had but little cause to suspect it in either. She strictly enjoined them to avoid all correspondence with him. This Matilda fervently promised; but Isabella, who flattered herself that she meant no more than to promote his union with her friend, could not determine to avoid him, and made no reply.

"I will go to the convent," said Hippolita, "and order new masses to be said for a deliverance from these calamities."

"Oh, my mother," said Matilda, "you mean to quit us: you mean to take sanctuary, and to give my father an opportunity of pursuing his fatal intentions. Alas! on my knees I supplicate you to forbear: will you leave me a prey to Frederic? I will follow you to the convent."

"Be at peace, my child," said Hippolita; "I will return instantly. I will never abandon thee, until I know it is the will of Heaven, and for thy benefit."

"Do not deceive me," said Matilda. "I will not marry Frederic until thou commandest it. Alas! what will become of me?"

"Why that exclamation?" said Hippolita. "I have promised thee to return."

"Ah, my mother," replied Matilda; "stay and save me from myself. A frown from thee can do more than all my father's severity. I have given away my heart, and you alone can make me recall it."

"No more," said Hippolita: "thou must not relapse, Matilda."

"I can quit Theodore," said she, "but must I wed another? Let me attend thee to the altar, and shut myself from the world for ever."

"Thy fate depends on thy father," said Hippolita: "I have ill bestowed my tenderness, if it has taught thee to revere aught beyond him. Adieu! my child, I go to pray for thee."

Hippolita's real purpose was to demand of Jerome, whether in conscience she might not consent to the divorce. She had oft urged Manfred to resign the principality, which the delicacy of her conscience rendered an hourly burden to her. These scruples concurred to make the separation from her husband appear less dreadful to her, than it would have seemed in any other situation.

Jerome, at quitting the castle overnight, had questioned Theodore severely why he had accused him to Manfred of being privy to his escape. Theodore owned it had been with design to prevent Manfred's suspicion from alighting on Matilda; and added, the holiness of Jerome's life and character secured him from the tyrant's wrath. Jerome was heartily grieved to discover his son's inclination for that princess; and leaving him to his rest, promised in the morning to acquaint him with important reasons for conquering his passion. Theodore, like Isabella, was too recently acquainted with parental authority to submit to its decisions against the impulse of his heart. He had little curiosity to learn the friar's reasons, and less disposition to obey them. The lovely Matilda had made stronger impressions on him than filial affection. All night he pleased himself with visions of love; and it was not till late after the morning-office that he recollected the friar's commands to attend him at Alfonso's tomb.

"Young man," said Jerome, when he saw him, "this tardiness does not please me. Have a father's commands already so little weight?"

Theodore made awkward excuses, and attributed his delay to having overslept himself.

"And on whom were thy dreams employed?" said the friar sternly. His son blushed. "Come, come," resumed the friar, "inconsiderate youth, this must not be; eradicate this guilty passion from thy breast."

"Guilty passion!" cried Theodore: "can guilt dwell with innocent beauty and virtuous modesty?"

"It is sinful," replied the friar, "to cherish those whom Heaven has doomed to destruction. A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation."

"Will Heaven visit the innocent for the crimes of the guilty?" said Theodore. "The fair Matilda has virtues enough ——"

"To undo thee," interrupted Jerome. "Hast thou so soon forgotten that twice the savage Manfred has pronounced thy sentence?"

"Nor have I forgotten, sir," said Theodore, "that the charity of his daughter delivered me from his power. I can forget injuries, but never benefits."

"The injuries thou hast received from Manfred's race," said the friar, "are beyond what thou canst conceive. Reply not, but view this holy image! Beneath this marble monument rest the ashes of the good Alfonso; a prince adorned with every virtue; the father of his people; the delight of mankind! Kneel, headstrong boy, and list, while a father unfolds a tale of horror, that will expel every sentiment from thy soul, but sensations of sacred vengeance. Alfonso! much injured prince! let thy unsatisfied shade sit awful on the troubled air, while these trembling lips —— Ha! who comes there?"

"The most wretched of women," said Hippolita, entering the choir. "Good father, art thou at leisure? but why this kneeling youth? What means the horror imprinted on each countenance? Why at this venerable tomb? —alas! hast thou seen aught?"

"We were pouring forth our orisons to Heaven," replied the friar, with some confusion, "to put an end to the woes of this deplorable province. Join with us, lady: thy spotless soul may obtain an exemption from the judgments which the portents of these days but too speakingly denounce against thy house."

"I pray fervently to Heaven to divert them," said the pious princess. "Thou knowest it has been the occupation of my life to wrest a blessing for my lord and my harmless children. One, alas! is taken from me; would Heaven but hear me for my poor Matilda! Father, intercede for her."

"Every heart will bless her!" cried Theodore with rapture.

"Be dumb, rash youth," said Jerome. "And thou, fond princess, contend not with the powers above. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: bless his holy name, and submit to his decrees."

"I do most devoutly," said Hippolita; "but will he not spare my only comfort? Must Matilda perish too?—Ah, father, I came—but dismiss thy son. No ear but thine must hear what I have to utter."

"May Heaven grant thy every wish, most excellent princess!" said Theodore, retiring. Jerome frowned.

Hippolita then acquainted the friar with a proposal she had suggested to Manfred, his approbation of it, and the tender of Matilda that he was gone to make to Frederic. Jerome could not conceal his dislike of the motion, which he covered under pretence of the improbability that Frederic, the nearest of blood to Alfonso, and who was come to claim his succession, would yield to an alliance with the usurper of his right. But nothing could equal the perplexity of the friar, when Hippolita confessed her readiness not to oppose the separation, and demanded his opinion on the legality of her acquiescence. The friar catched eagerly at her request of his advice; and without explaining his aversion to the proposed marriage of Manfred and Isabella, he painted to Hippolita, in the most alarming colours, the sinfulness of her consent, denounced judgments against her if she complied, and enjoined her, in the severest terms, to treat any such proposition with every mark of indignation and refusal.

Manfred, in the mean time, had broken his purpose to Frederic, and proposed the double marriage. That weak prince, who had been struck with the charms of Matilda, listened but too eagerly to the offer He forgot his

enmity to Manfred, whom he saw but little hope of dispossessing by force; and flattering himself that no issue might succeed from the union of his daughter with the tyrant, he looked upon his own succession to the principality as facilitated by wedding Matilda. He made faint opposition to the proposal; affecting, for form only, not to acquiesce unless Hippolita should consent to the divorce. Manfred took that upon himself. Transported with his success, and impatient to see himself in a situation to expect sons, he hastened to his wife's apartment, determined to extort her compliance. He learned with indignation that she was absent at the convent. His guilt suggested to him that she had probably been informed by Isabella of his purpose. He doubted whether her retirement to the convent did not import an intention of remaining there, until she could raise obstacles to their divorce; and the suspicions he had already entertained of Jerome made him apprehend that the friar would not only traverse his views, but might have inspired Hippolita with the resolution of taking sanctuary. Impatient to unravel this clue, and to defeat its success, Manfred hastened to the convent, and arrived there, as the friar was earnestly exhorting the princess never to yield to the divorce.

"Madam," said Manfred, "what business drew you hither? why did you not await my return from the marquis?"

"I came to implore a blessing on your councils," replied Hippolita.

"My councils do not need a friar's intervention," said Manfred; "and of all men living is that hoary traitor the only one whom you delight to confer with?"

"Profane prince!" said Jerome; "is it at the altar thou choosest to insult the servants of the altar? — but, Manfred, thy impious schemes are known. Heaven and this virtuous lady know them: — nay, frown not, prince. The church despises thy menaces. Her thunders will be heard above thy wrath. Dare to proceed in thy cursed purpose of a divorce, until her sentence be known, and here I launch her anathema at thy head."

"Audacious rebel!" said Manfred, endeavouring to

conceal the awe with which the friar's words inspired him; "dost thou presume to threaten thy lawful prince?"

"Thou art no lawful prince," said Jerome; "thou art no prince: — go, discuss thy claim with Frederic; and when that is done ——"

"It is done," replied Manfred: "Frederic accepts Matilda's hand, and is content to wave his claim, unless I have no male issue."— As he spoke those words, three drops of blood fell from the nose of Alfonso's statue. Manfred turned pale, and the princess sunk on her knees.

"Behold!" said the friar; "mark this miraculous indication that the blood of Alfonso will never mix with that of Manfred!"

"My gracious lord," said Hippolita, "let us submit ourselves to Heaven. Think not thy ever obedient wife rebels against thy authority. I have no will but that of my lord and the church. To that revered tribunal let us appeal. It does not depend on us to burst the bonds that unite us. If the church shall approve the dissolution of our marriage, be it so — I have but few years, and those of sorrow, to pass. Where can they be worn away so well as at the foot of this altar, in prayers for thine and Matilda's safety?"

"But thou shalt not remain here until then," said Manfred. "Repair with me to the castle, and there I will advise on the proper measures for a divorce. But this meddling friar comes not thither: my hospitable roof shall never more harbour a traitor — and for thy reverence's offspring," continued he, "I banish him from my dominions. He, I ween, is no sacred personage, nor under the protection of the church. Whoever weds Isabella, it shall not be Father Falconara's started-up son."

"They start up," said the friar, "who are suddenly beheld in the seat of lawful princes; but they wither away like the grass, and their place knows them no more."

Manfred, casting a look of scorn at the friar, led Hippolita forth; but at the door of the church whispered one of his attendants to remain concealed about the convent, and bring him instant notice if any one from the castle should repair thither.

CHAPTER V.

Every reflection which Manfred made on the friar's behaviour conspired to persuade him that Jerome was privy to an amour between Isabella and Theodore. But Jerome's new presumption, so dissonant from his former meekness, suggested still deeper apprehensions. The prince even suspected that the friar depended on some secret support from Frederic, whose arrival coinciding with the novel appearance of Theodore seemed to bespeak a correspondence. Still more was he troubled with the resemblance of Theodore to Alfonso's portrait. The latter he knew had unquestionably died without issue. Frederic had consented to bestow Isabella on him. These contradictions agitated his mind with numberless pangs. He saw but two methods of extricating himself from his difficulties. The one was to resign his dominions to the marquis.—Pride, ambition, and his reliance on ancient prophecies, which had pointed out a possibility of his preserving them to his posterity, combated that thought. The other was to press his marriage with Isabella. After long ruminating on these anxious thoughts, as he marched silently with Hippolita to the castle, he at last discoursed with that princess on the subject of his disquiet, and used every insinuating and plausible argument to extract her consent to, even her promise of promoting, the divorce. Hippolita needed little persuasions to bend her to his pleasure. She endeavoured to win him over to the measure of resigning his dominions; but finding her exhortations fruitless, she assured him, that, as far as her conscience would allow, she would raise no opposition to a separation, though without better founded scruples than what he yet alleged she would not engage to be active in demanding it.

This compliance, though inadequate, was sufficient to raise Manfred's hopes. He trusted that his power and wealth would easily advance his suit at the court of Rome, whither he resolved to engage Frederic to take a journey on purpose. That prince had discovered so much passion for

Matilda, that Manfred hoped to obtain all he wished by holding out or withdrawing his daughter's charms, according as the marquis should appear more or less disposed to co-operate in his views. Even the absence of Frederic would be a material point gained, until he could take further measures for his security.

Dismissing Hippolita to her apartment, he repaired to that of the marquis; but crossing the great hall, through which he was to pass, he met Bianca. The damsel he knew was in the confidence of both the young ladies. It immediately occurred to him to sift her on the subject of Isabella and Theodore. Calling her aside into the recess of the oriel window of the hall, and soothing her with many fair words and promises, he demanded of her whether she knew aught of the state of Isabella's affections.

"I! my lord! no, my lord — yes, my lord — poor lady! she is wonderfully alarmed about her father's wounds! but I tell her he will do well; don't your highness think so?"

"I do not ask you," replied Manfred, "what she thinks about her father; but you are in her secrets. Come, be a good girl, and tell me; is there any young man — ha! — you understand me."

"Lord bless me! understand your highness, no, not I: I told her a few vulnerary herbs and repose" ——

"I am not talking," replied the prince, impatiently, "about her father; I know he will do well."

"Bless me, I rejoice to hear your highness say so; for though I thought it not right to let my young lady despond, methought his greatness had a wan look, and a something — I remember when young Ferdinand was wounded by the Venetian ——"

"Thou answerest from the point," interrupted Manfred; "but here, take this jewel, perhaps that may fix thy attention; nay, no reverences: my favour shall not stop here: — come, tell me truly, how stands Isabella's heart."

"Well, your highness has such a way!" said Bianca, "to be sure; but can your highness keep a secret? if it should ever come out of your lips ——"

"It shall not, it shall not," cried Manfred.

"Nay, but swear, your highness. By my halidame, if it should ever be known that I said it — why, truth is truth, I do not think my Lady Isabella ever much affectioned my young lord, your son — yet he was a sweet youth, as one should see. I am sure, if I had been a princess — but bless me! I must attend my Lady Matilda; she will marvel what is become of me."

"Stay!" cried Manfred, "thou hast not satisfied my question. Hast thou ever carried any message, any letter?"

"I! good gracious!" cried Bianca; "I carry a letter? I would not to be a queen. I hope your highness thinks, though I am poor, I am honest — did your highness never hear what Count Marsigli offered me when he came a wooing to my Lady Matilda?"

"I have not leisure," said Manfred, "to listen to thy tales. I do not question thy honesty; but it is thy duty to conceal nothing from me. How long has Isabella been acquainted with Theodore?"

"Nay, there is nothing can escape your highness," said Bianca: "not that I know any thing of the matter. Theodore, to be sure, is a proper young man, and, as my Lady Matilda says, the very image of good Alfonso: has not your highness remarked it?"

"Yes, yes, — no, — thou torturest me," said Manfred: "where did they meet? when?"

"Who? my Lady Matilda?" said Bianca.

"No, no, not Matilda; Isabella. When did Isabella first become acquainted with this Theodore?"

"Virgin Mary!" said Bianca, "how should I know?"

"Thou dost know," said Manfred, "and I must know; I will."

"Lord! your highness is not jealous of young Theodore!" said Bianca.

"Jealous! no, no: why should I be jealous? perhaps I mean to unite them, if I were sure Isabella would have no repugnance."

"Repugnance! no, I'll warrant her," said Bianca: "he is as comely a youth as ever trod on Christian ground. We are all in love with him; there is not a soul in the castle but would be rejoiced to have him for our prince —

I mean, when it shall please Heaven to call your highness to itself."

"Indeed," said Manfred, "has it gone so far? oh, this cursed friar! but I must not lose time: — go, Bianca, attend Isabella; but I charge thee, not a word of what has passed. Find out how she is affected towards Theodore: bring me good news, and that ring has a companion. Wait at the foot of the winding staircase: I am going to visit the marquis, and will talk farther with thee at my return."

Manfred, after some general conversation, desired Frederic to dismiss the two knights his companions, having to talk with him on urgent affairs. As soon as they were alone, he began, in artful guise, to sound the marquis on the subject of Matilda; and finding him disposed to his wish, he let drop hints on the difficulties that would attend the celebration of their marriage, unless — at that instant Bianca burst into the room with a wildness in her look and gestures that spoke the utmost terror.

"Oh, my lord, my lord!" cried she; "we are all undone! it is come again! it is come again!"

"What is come again?" cried Manfred, amazed.

"Oh, the hand! the giant! the hand! — support me! I am terrified out of my senses," cried Bianca; "I will not sleep in the castle to-night. Where shall I go? my things may come after me to-morrow — would I had been content to wed Francesco! — this comes of ambition."

"What has terrified thee thus, young woman?" said the marquis. "Thou art safe here; be not alarmed."

"Oh, your greatness is wonderfully good," said Bianca, "but I dare not — no, pray let me go. I had rather leave every thing behind me, than stay another hour under this roof."

"Go to, thou hast lost thy senses," said Manfred. "Interrupt us not; we were communing on important matters. My lord, this wench is subject to fits. Come with me, Bianca."

"Oh, the saints, no," said Bianca; "for certain it comes to warn your highness: why should it appear to me else? I say my prayers morning and evening. Oh, if your highness had believed Diego! 'Tis the same hand that he saw the foot to in the gallery chamber. Father

Jerome has often told us the prophecy would be out one of these days. 'Bianca,' said he, 'mark my words——'"

"Thou ravest," said Manfred in a rage! "begone, and keep these fooleries to frighten thy companions."

"What, my lord!" cried Bianca, "do you think I have seen nothing? Go to the foot of the great stairs yourself — as I live I saw it."

"Saw what? Tell us, fair maid, what thou hast seen," said Frederic.

"Can your highness listen," said Manfred, "to the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them?"

"This is more than fancy," said the marquis; "her terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination. Tell us, fair maiden, what it is has moved thee thus."

"Yes, my lord, thank your greatness," said Bianca. "I believe I look very pale; I shall be better when I have recovered myself. I was going to my Lady Isabella's chamber by his highness's order——"

"We do not want the circumstances," interrupted Manfred. "Since his highness will have it so, proceed; but be brief."

"Lord! your highness thwarts one so!" replied Bianca. "I fear my hair — I am sure I never in my life — well, as I was telling your greatness, I was going, by his highness's order, to my Lady Isabella's chamber. She lies in the watchet-coloured chamber, on the right hand, one pair of stairs. So when I came to the great stairs, I was looking on his highness's present here——"

"Grant me patience!" said Manfred; "will this wench never come to the point? What imports it to the marquis, that I gave thee a bauble for thy faithful attendance on my daughter; we want to know what thou sawest."

"I was going to tell your highness," said Bianca, "if you would permit me. So as I was rubbing the ring — I am sure I had not gone up three steps, but I heard the rattling of armour; for all the world such a clatter, as Diego says he heard when the giant turned him about in the gallery-chamber."

"What does she mean, my lord?" said the marquis: "is your castle haunted by giants and goblins?"

"Lord, what, has not your greatness heard the story of the giant in the gallery-chamber?" cried Bianca. "I marvel his highness has not told you — mayhap you do not know there is a prophecy——"

"This trifling is intolerable," interrupted Manfred. "Let us dismiss this silly wench, my lord; we have more important affairs to discuss."

"By your favour," said Frederic, "these are no trifles. The enormous sabre I was directed to in the wood, yon casque, its fellow — are these visions of this poor maiden's brain?"

"So Jaquez thinks, may it please your greatness," said Bianca. "He says this moon will not be out without our seeing some strange revolution. For my part, I should not be surprised if it was to happen to-morrow; for, as I was saying, when I heard the clattering of armour, I was all in a cold sweat: I looked up, and, if your greatness will believe me, I saw upon the uppermost banister of the great stairs a hand in armour, as big, as big — I thought I should have swooned — I never stopped until I came hither. Would I were well out of this castle! My Lady Matilda told me but yester-morning that her highness Hippolita knows something."

"Thou art an insolent!" cried Manfred. "Lord marquis, it much misgives me that this scene is concerted to affront me. Are my own domestics suborned to spread tales injurious to my honour? Pursue your claim by manly daring; or let us bury our feuds, as was proposed, by the intermarriage of our children. But trust me, it ill becomes a prince of your bearing to practise on mercenary wenches."

"I scorn your imputation," said Frederic: "until this hour I never set eyes on this damsel. I have given her no jewel! My lord, my lord, your conscience, your guilt accuses you, and would throw the suspicion on me; but keep your daughter, and think no more of Isabella. The judgments already fallen on your house forbid me matching into it."

Manfred, alarmed at the resolute tone in which Frederic delivered these words, endeavoured to pacify him. Dismissing Bianca, he made such submissions to the marquis, and threw in such artful encomiums on Matilda, that Frederic was once more staggered. However, as his passion was of so recent a date, it could not at once surmount the scruples he had conceived. He had gathered enough from Bianca's discourse to persuade him that Heaven declared itself against Manfred. The proposed marriages, too, removed his claim to a distance; and the principality of Otranto was a stronger temptation than the contingent reversion of it with Matilda. Still he would not absolutely recede from his engagements; but purposing to gain time, he demanded of Manfred if it was true in fact that Hippolita consented to the divorce. The prince, transported to find no other obstacle, and depending on his influence over his wife, assured the marquis it was so, and that he might satisfy himself of the truth from her own mouth.

As they were thus discoursing, word was brought that the banquet was prepared. Manfred conducted Frederic to the great hall, where they were received by Hippolita and the young princesses. Manfred placed the marquis next to Matilda, and seated himself between his wife and Isabella. Hippolita comported herself with an easy gravity; but the young ladies were silent and melancholy. Manfred, who was determined to pursue his point with the marquis in the remainder of the evening, pushed on the feast until it waxed late; affecting unrestrained gaiety, and plying Frederic with repeated goblets of wine. The latter, more upon his guard than Manfred wished, declined his frequent challenges, on pretence of his late loss of blood; while the prince, to raise his own disordered spirits, and to counterfeit unconcern, indulged himself in plentiful draughts, though not to the intoxication of his senses.

The evening being far advanced, the banquet concluded. Manfred would have withdrawn with Frederic; but the latter pleading weakness and want of repose, retired to his chamber, gallantly telling the prince, that his daughter should amuse his highness until himself could attend him.

Manfred accepted the party, and, to the no small grief of Isabella, accompanied her to her apartment. Matilda waited on her mother, to enjoy the freshness of the evening on the ramparts of the castle.

Soon as the company were dispersed their several ways, Frederic, quitting his chamber, enquired if Hippolita was alone, and was told by one of her attendants, who had not noticed her going forth, that at that hour she generally withdrew to her oratory, where he probably would find her. The marquis, during the repast, had beheld Matilda with increase of passion. He now wished to find Hippolita in the disposition her lord had promised. The portents that had alarmed him were forgotten in his desires. Stealing softly and unobserved to the apartment of Hippolita, he entered it with a resolution to encourage her acquiescence to the divorce, having perceived that Manfred was resolved to make the possession of Isabella an unalterable condition, before he would grant Matilda to his wishes.

The marquis was not surprised at the silence that reigned in the princess's apartment. Concluding her, as he had been advertised, in her oratory, he passed on. The door was ajar; the evening gloomy and overcast. Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seemed not a woman, but one in a long woollen weed, whose back was towards him. The person seemed absorbed in prayer. The marquis was about to return, when the figure rising, stood some moments fixed in meditation, without regarding him. The marquis, expecting the holy person to come forth, and meaning to excuse his uncivil interruption, said, —

"Reverend father, I sought the Lady Hippolita."

"Hippolita!" replied a hollow voice; "camest thou to this castle to seek Hippolita?" And then the figure, turning slowly round, discovered to Frederic the fleshless jaws and empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl.

"Angels of peace protect me!" cried Frederic, recoiling.

"Deserve their protection," said the spectre.

Frederic, falling on his knees, adjured the phantom to take pity on him.

"Dost thou not remember me?" said the apparition. "Remember the wood of Joppa!"

"Art thou that holy hermit?" cried Frederic, trembling; "can I do ought for thy eternal peace?"

"Wast thou delivered from bondage," said the spectre, "to pursue carnal delights? Hast thou forgotten the buried sabre, and the behest of Heaven engraven on it?"

"I have not, I have not," said Frederic; "but say, blest spirit, what is thy errand to me? what remains to be done?"

"To forget Matilda," said the apparition, and vanished.

Frederic's blood froze in his veins. For some minutes he remained motionless. Then falling prostrate on his face before the altar, he besought the intercession of every saint for pardon. A flood of tears succeeded to this transport; and the image of the beauteous Matilda rushing, in spite of him, on his thoughts, he lay on the ground in a conflict of penitence and passion. Ere he could recover from this agony of his spirits, the Princess Hippolita, with a taper in her hand, entered the oratory alone. Seeing a man without motion on the floor, she gave a shriek, concluding him dead. Her fright brought Frederic to himself. Rising suddenly, his face bedewed with tears, he would have rushed from her presence; but Hippolita stopping him, conjured him, in the most plaintive accents, to explain the cause of his disorder, and by what strange chance she had found him there in that posture.

"Ah, virtuous princess!" said the marquis, penetrated with grief, and stopped.

"For the love of Heaven, my lord," said Hippolita, "disclose the cause of this transport! What mean these doleful sounds, this alarming exclamation on my name? What woes has Heaven still in store for the wretched Hippolita? — yet silent! By every pitying angel, I adjure thee, noble prince," continued she, falling at his feet, "to disclose the purport of what lies at thy heart. I see thou feelest for me; thou feelest the sharp pangs that thou

inflictest. Speak, for pity! Does aught thou knowest concern my child!"

"I cannot speak," cried Frederic, bursting from her. "Oh, Matilda!"

Quitting the princess thus abruptly, he hastened to his own apartment. At the door of it he was accosted by Manfred, who, flushed by wine and love, had come to seek him, and to propose to waste some hours of the night in music and revelling. Frederic, offended at an invitation so dissonant from the mood of his soul, pushed him rudely aside, and, entering his chamber, flung the door intemperately against Manfred, and bolted it inwards. The haughty prince, enraged at this unaccountable behaviour, withdrew in a frame of mind capable of the most fatal excesses. As he crossed the court, he was met by the domestic whom he planted at the convent as a spy on Jerome and Theodore. This man, almost breathless with the haste he had made, informed his lord, that Theodore and some lady from the castle were at that instant in private conference at the tomb of Alfonso, in St. Nicholas's church. He had dogged Theodore thither; but the gloominess of the night had prevented his discovering who the woman was.

Manfred, whose spirits were inflamed, and whom Isabella had driven from her on his urging his passion with too little reserve, did not doubt but the inquietude she had expressed had been occasioned by her impatience to meet Theodore. Provoked by this conjecture, and enraged at her father, he hastened secretly to the great church. Gliding softly between the aisles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonshine that shone faintly through the illuminated windows, he stole towards the tomb of Alfonso, to which he was directed by indistinct whispers of the persons he sought. The first sounds he could distinguish were,—

"Does it, alas! depend on me? Manfred will never permit our union."

"No, this shall prevent it!" cried the tyrant, "drawing his dagger, and plunging it over her shoulder into the bosom of the person that spoke.

"Ah me, I am slain!" cried Matilda, sinking: "good Heaven receive my soul!"

"Savage, inhuman monster, what hast thou done?" cried Theodore, rushing on him and wrenching his dagger from him.

"Stop, stop thy impious hand!" cried Matilda: "it is my father!"

Manfred, waking as from a trance, beat his breast, twisted his hands in his locks, and endeavoured to recover his dagger from Theodore to despatch himself. Theodore, scarce less distracted, and only mastering the transports of his grief to assist Matilda, had now by his cries drawn some of the monks to his aid. While part of them endeavoured, in concert with the afflicted Theodore, to stop the blood of the dying princess, the rest prevented Manfred from laying violent hands on himself.

Matilda, resigning herself patiently to her fate, acknowledged, with looks of grateful love, the zeal of Theodore. Yet oft, as her faintness would permit her speech its way, she begged the assistants to comfort her father.

Jerome, by this time, had learnt the fatal news, and reached the church. His looks seemed to reproach Theodore; but turning to Manfred, he said, "Now, tyrant, behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of Alfonso cried to Heaven for vengeance; and Heaven has permitted its altar to be polluted by assassination, that thou mightest shed thy own blood at the foot of that prince's sepulchre!"

"Cruel man," cried Matilda, "to aggravate the woes of a parent! may Heaven bless my father, and forgive him as I do! My lord, my gracious sire, dost thou forgive thy child? Indeed I came not hither to meet Theodore. I found him praying at this tomb, whither my mother sent me to intercede for thee, for her—dearest father, bless your child, and say you forgive her."

"Forgive thee, murderous monster," cried Manfred, "can assassins forgive? I took thee for Isabella; but heaven directed my bloody hand to the heart of my child—oh, Matilda, I cannot utter it: canst thou forgive the blindness of my rage?"

"I can, I do, and may Heaven confirm it," said Matilda; "but while I have life to ask it—oh, my mother, what

will she feel! will you comfort her, my lord, will you not put her away? indeed she loves you—oh, I am faint; bear me to the castle—can I live to have her close my eyes?"

Theodore and the monks besought her earnestly to suffer herself to be borne into the convent; but her instances were so pressing to be carried to the castle, that, placing her on a litter, they conveyed her thither as she requested. Theodore supporting her head with his arm, and hanging over her in an agony of despairing love, still endeavoured to inspire her with hopes of life. Jerome on the other side comforted her with discourses of heaven; and holding a crucifix before her, which she bathed with innocent tears, prepared her for her passage to immortality. Manfred, plunged in the deepest affliction, followed the litter in despair.

Ere they reached the castle, Hippolita, informed of the dreadful catastrophe, had flown to meet her murdered child; but when she saw the afflicted procession, the mightiness of her grief deprived her of her senses, and she fell lifeless to the earth in a swoon. Isabella and Frederic, who attended her, were overwhelmed in almost equal sorrow. Matilda alone seemed insensible to her own situation: every thought was lost in tenderness for her mother. Ordering the litter to stop, as soon as Hippolita was brought to herself, she asked for her father. He approached, unable to speak. Matilda, seizing his hand and her mother's, locked them in her own, and then clasped them to her heart. Manfred could not support this act of pathetic piety. He dashed himself on the ground, and cursed the day he was born. Isabella, apprehensive that these struggles of passion were more than Matilda could support, took upon herself to order Manfred to be borne to his apartment, while she caused Matilda to be conveyed to the nearest chamber. Hippolita, scarce more alive than her daughter, was regardless of every thing but her; but when the tender Isabella's care would have likewise removed her, while the surgeons examined Matilda's wound, she cried,—

"Remove me! never! never! I lived but in her, and will expire with her." Matilda raised her eyes at her mother's voice, but closed them again without speaking. Her sinking pulse and the damp coldness of her hand soon

dispelled all hopes of recovery. Theodore followed the surgeons into the outer chamber, and heard them pronounce the fatal sentence with a transport equal to frenzy.

"Since she cannot live mine," cried he, "at least she shall be mine in death! Father! Jerome! will you not join our hands?" cried he to the friar, who with the marquis had accompanied the surgeons.

"What means thy distracted rashness?" said Jerome; "is this an hour for marriage?"

"It is, it is," cried Theodore: "alas! there is no other!"

"Young man, thou art too unadvised," said Frederic: "dost thou think we are to listen to thy fond transports in this hour of fate? what pretensions hast thou to the princess?"

"Those of a prince," said Theodore, "of the sovereign of Otranto. This reverend man, my father, has informed me who I am."

"Thou ravest," said the marquis: "there is no prince of Otranto but myself, now Manfred, by murder, by sacrilegious murder, has forfeited all pretensions."

"My lord," said Jerome, assuming an air of command, "he tells you true. It was not my purpose the secret should have been divulged so soon; but fate presses onward to its work. What his hot-headed passion has revealed, my tongue confirms. Know, prince, that when Alfonso set sail for the Holy Land——"

"Is this a season for explanations?" cried Theodore. "Father, come and unite me to the princess; she shall be mine — in every other thing I will dutifully obey you. My life! my adored Matilda!" continued Theodore, rushing back into the inner chamber, "will you not be mine? will you not bless your——" Isabella made signs to him to be silent, apprehending the princess was near her end. "What, is she dead?" cried Theodore; "is it possible?" The violence of his exclamations brought Matilda to herself. Lifting up her eyes, she looked around for her mother.

"Life of my soul! I am here," cried Hippolita; "think not I will quit thee!"

"Oh, you are too good," said Matilda; "but weep not

for me, my mother! I am going where sorrow never dwells; — Isabella, thou hast loved me: wo't thou not supply my fondness to this dear, dear woman? — Indeed I am faint!"

"Oh, my child, my child!" said Hippolita, in a flood of tears, "can I not withhold thee a moment?"

"It will not be," said Matilda: "commend me to Heaven — where is my father? Forgive him, dearest mother — forgive him my death; it was an error. Oh, I had forgotten, dearest mother, I vowed never to see Theodore more — perhaps that has drawn down this calamity, but it was not intentional — can you pardon me?"

"Oh, wound not my agonising soul," said Hippolita; "thou never couldst offend me. Alas! she faints! help! help!"

"I would say something more," said Matilda, struggling, "but it wonnot be — Isabella — Theodore — for my sake — oh!" She expired. Isabella and her women tore Hippolita from the corse; but Theodore threatened destruction to all who attempted to remove him from it. He printed a thousand kisses on her clay-cold hands, and uttered every expression that despairing love could dictate.

Isabella, in the mean time, was accompanying the afflicted Hippolita to her apartment; but in the middle of the court they were met by Manfred, who, distracted with his own thoughts, and anxious once more to behold his daughter, was advancing towards the chamber where she lay. As the moon was now at its height, he read in the countenances of this unhappy company the event he dreaded.

"What! is she dead?" cried he in wild confusion: a clap of thunder at that instant shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind. Frederic and Jerome thought the last day was at hand. The latter, forcing Theodore along with them, rushed into the court. The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the centre of the ruins.

"Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso!" said the vision; and having pronounced those words, accom-

panied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards heaven, where the clouds parting asunder, the form of St. Nicholas was seen, and receiving Alfonso's shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory.

The beholders fell prostrate on their faces, acknowledging the divine will. The first that broke silence was Hippolita.

"My lord," said she to the desponding Manfred, "behold the vanity of human greatness! Conrad is gone! Matilda is no more! in Theodore we view the true prince of Otranto. By what miracle he is so, I know not — suffice it to us, our doom is pronounced! Shall we not — can we but — dedicate the few deplorable hours we have to live, in deprecating the farther wrath of Heaven? Heaven ejects us: whither can we fly, but to yon holy cells that yet offer us a retreat?"

"Thou guiltless but unhappy woman! unhappy by my crimes!" replied Manfred, "my heart at last is open to thy devout admonitions. Oh, could — but it cannot be — ye are lost in wonder, — let me at last do justice on myself! To heap shame on my own head is all the satisfaction I have left to offer to offended Heaven. My story has drawn down these judgments: let my confession atone — but ah! what can atone for usurpation and a murdered child; a child murdered in a consecrated place? List, sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants!

"Alfonso, ye all know, died in the Holy Land — ye would interrupt me — ye would say he came not fairly to his end — it is most true — why else this bitter cup which Manfred must drink to the dregs? Ricardo, my grandfather, was his chamberlain — I would draw a veil over my ancestor's crimes, but it is in vain! Alfonso died by poison. A fictitious will declared Ricardo his heir. His crimes pursued him. Yet he lost no Conrad, no Matilda! I pay the price of usurpation for all. A storm overtook him. Haunted by his guilt, he vowed to St. Nicholas to found a church and two convents, if he lived to reach Otranto. The sacrifice was accepted: the saint appeared to him in a dream and promised that Ricardo's posterity should reign in

Otranto, until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle, and as long as issue-male from Ricardo's loins should remain to enjoy it. Alas! alas! nor male nor female, except myself, remains of all his wretched race!—I have done—the woes of these three days speak the rest. How this young man can be Alfonso's heir, I know not—yet I do not doubt it. His are these dominions: I resign them—yet I knew not Alfonso had an heir—I question not the will of Heaven—poverty and prayer must fill up the woeful space, until Manfred shall be summoned to Ricardo."

"What remains is my part to declare," said Jerome. "When Alfonso set sail for the Holy Land, he was driven by a storm to the coast of Sicily. The other vessel, which bore Ricardo and his train, as your *lordship* must have heard, was separated from him."

"It is most true," said Manfred; "and the title you give me is more than an outcast can claim—well! be it so—proceed."

Jerome blushed, and continued.

"For three months Lord Alfonso was wind-bound in Sicily. There he became enamoured of a fair virgin, named Victoria. He was too pious to tempt her to forbidden pleasures. They were married. Yet deeming this amour incongruous with the holy vow of arms by which he was bound, he determined to conceal their nuptials, until his return from the crusado, when he purposed to seek and acknowledge her for his lawful wife. He left her pregnant. During his absence she was delivered of a daughter; but scarce had she felt a mother's pangs, ere she heard the fatal rumour of her lord's death, and the succession of Ricardo. What could a friendless, helpless woman do? would her testimony avail?—yet, my lord, I have an authentic writing——"

"It needs not," said Manfred; "the horrors of these days, the vision we have but now seen, all corroborate thy evidence beyond a thousand parchments. Matilda's death and my expulsion——"

"Be composed, my lord," said Hippolita; "this holy man did not mean to recall your griefs."

Jerome proceeded.

"I shall not dwell on what is needless. The daughter of which Victoria was delivered was, at her maturity, bestowed in marriage on me. Victoria died; and the secret remained locked in my breast. Theodore's narrative has told the rest."

The friar ceased. The disconsolate company retired to the remaining part of the castle. In the morning, Manfred signed his abdication of the principality, with the approbation of Hippolita, and each took on them the habit of religion in the neighbouring convents. Frederic offered his daughter to the new prince, which Hippolita's tenderness for Isabella concurred to promote. But Theodore's grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not until after frequent discourses with Isabella of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness, but in the society of one with whom he could for ever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul.

THE END.

THE

BRAVO OF VENICE:

A ROMANCE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

BY M. G. LEWIS.

What black magician conjures up this fiend?—
What! do ye tremble? are ye all afraid?
Alas! I blame you not, for ye are mortal,
And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil—
Avaunt! thou dreadful minister of hell!

Richard the Third.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, 8. NEW BURLINGTON STREET
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):
BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH;
CUMMING, DUBLIN; AND
GALIGNANI, PARIS.
1834.

MEMOIR

OF

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

"Matthew Gregory Lewis, Esq., was the son of a gentleman of good property, consisting principally of estates in the island of Jamaica, and who possessed sufficient influence with government to obtain for himself the lucrative and responsible post of under secretary at war. His son, the subject of this article, was born in the metropolis in 1773, and was educated at Westminster school, on quitting which foundation he travelled for improvement, especially into Germany, the literature of which country produced a strong impression upon him, and gave that peculiar turn to his compositions which placed him in the foremost rank among the delineators of the marvellous and terrific.

"Of his writings, the first was 'The Monk,' a romance, in 3 vols. 12mo., which ran through a great number of editions. This was followed by 'Feudal Tyrants,' a romance, in 4 vols.; 'Romantic Tales,' 4 vols.; 'Tales of Wonder,' in verse, 1 vol. 8vo.; 'Tales of Terror,' 1 vol. 8vo.; 'The Castle Spectre,' a romantic drama; 'Adelmorn, the Outlaw;' 'Venoni,' a tragedy; a volume of miscellaneous Poetry, and 'The Bravo of Venice,' a translation from the German, 1 vol. 8vo.

"Mr. Lewis had a seat in parliament, but seldom took part in the business of the house. His death occurred in 1818 at sea, while on a voyage home from a visit to his West Indian possessions. An idle story has been circulated, that it was occasioned by poison, administered to him by a negro, whom he had incautiously acquainted that he had ordered the emancipation of all his slaves at his decease." — *Annual Biography.*

The powerful sensation produced by "The Bravo of Venice," on its first appearance, was the natural effect of a performance which involved in its pages more of subtle contrivance, broad and bold colouring, and profound mystery, than was common even in the fiction of those days, when the appetite for stories of wonder and excitement was so liberally indulged. It may be safely said of this romance, that when once read it can never be forgotten. Its style and subject are of the most daring kind; and the conception and execution of its characters leave nothing to be wished for on the score of vigour and strong dramatic effect. The opening scene on the border of the great canal in Venice is peculiarly striking, beautiful, and pathetic. Never was the hero of a tale more finely introduced to the notice of a reader. Mystery, solitude, and adversity are his harbingers; and, laden with his sorrows, he stands in the midnight silence among the deserted colonnades of the city an inscrutable outcast, evidently, however, destined to accomplish some great and perilous work. It might, perhaps, have been better had the Signor Buonarotti, who figures so conspicuously in the first incident of the story, been again brought forward, if only to fulfil the Bravo's threat. But this slight defect is amply atoned for by the extraordinary events which arrest the reader's curiosity at the turn of every page. Such are the scenes between Abellino and the banditti — the startling incident with the doge's niece in the gardens of Dolabella — the secret meetings of the conspirators — the astounding placard addressed by Abellino to the Venetians after the apprehension of the banditti — the interesting circumstances attached to Flodoardo — the sudden appearance of the Bravo in the private chamber of the doge — the interview between his highness and the young Florentine, where the capture of the awful and dreaded Bravo is proposed to the latter as the only price by which the noble youth can gain the hand of Rosabella — and the grand conclusion of the romance, where Abellino is delivered up to the doge, and where the mystery, which has brooded over the plot, is so ingeniously dissipated.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I MUST confess that in making this translation I have taken some liberties with the original. Every thing that relates to Monaldeschi (a personage who does not exist in the German romance) and the whole of the concluding chapter (with the exception of a very few sentences) have been added by myself. I have also omitted a song, supposed to be sung by Rosabella, in the fourth chapter of the third book, the merit of which I could not discover; and several passages, which seemed to me too harsh for the taste of English readers, have been either left out entirely, or considerably softened down. However, where the expressions appeared to be either characteristic of the author's style, or of the character by whom they were supposed to be used, I did not think myself at liberty to alter them; I have therefore suffered Parozzi's speech in the third book about "the devil's grandmother," as well as several others, to remain, though I request not to be supposed to have retained them in compliment to my own taste.

THE TRANSLATOR.

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THE

BRAVO OF VENICE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

VENICE.

It was evening; multitudes of light clouds, partially illumined by the moonbeams, overspread the horizon, and through them floated the full moon in tranquil majesty, while her splendour was reflected by every wave of the Adriatic Sea. All was hushed around; gently was the water rippled by the night-wind; gently did the night-wind sigh through the colonnades of Venice.

It was midnight; and still sat a stranger, solitary and sad, on the border of the great canal. Now with a glance he measured the battlements and proud towers of the city, and now he fixed his melancholy eyes upon the waters with a vacant stare. At length he spoke.

"Wretch that I am, whither shall I go? Here sit I in Venice, and what would it avail to wander further? What will become of me? All now slumber, save myself. The doge rests on his couch of down: the beggar's head presses his straw pillow; but for *me* there is no bed, except the cold damp earth! there is no gondolier so wretched

but he knows where to find work by day, and shelter by night; while *I*—while *I*—oh, dreadful is the destiny of which I am made the sport!"

He began to examine for the twentieth time the pockets of his tattered garments.

"No, not one paolo, by heavens! and I hunger almost to death!"

He unsheathed his sword; he waved it in the moonshine, and sighed as he marked the glittering of the steel.

"No, no! my old and true companion, thou and I must never part! Mine thou shalt remain, though I starve for it. Oh, was not that a golden time, when Valeria gave thee to me, and when, as she threw the belt over my shoulder, I kissed thee and Valeria? She has deserted us for another world; but thou and I will never part in this."

He wiped away a drop which hung upon his eyelid.

"Psha! 'twas not a tear: the night-wind is sharp and bitter, and makes the eyes water; but as for *tears*—Absurd! my weeping days are over."

And as he spoke, the unfortunate (for such by his discourse and situation he appeared to be) dashed his forehead against the earth, and his lips were already unclosed to curse the hour which gave him being, when he suddenly seemed to recollect himself. He rested his head on his elbow, and sang mournfully the burden of a song, which had often delighted his childhood in the castle of his ancestors.

"Right!" he said to himself: "were I to sink under the weight of my destiny, I should be myself no longer."

At that moment he heard a rustling at no great distance. He looked around, and in an adjacent street, which the moon faintly enlightened, he perceived a tall figure, wrapped in a cloak, pacing slowly backward and forward.

"'Tis the hand of God which hath guided him hither. Yes! I'll — I'll *beg!* Better to play the beggar in Venice, than the villain in Naples; for the beggar's heart may beat nobly though covered by rags!"

He said, sprang from the ground, and hastened towards

the adjoining street. Just as he entered it at one end, he perceived another person advancing through the other, of whose approach the first was no sooner aware, than he hastily retired into the shadow of a piazza, as anxious to conceal himself.

"What can this mean?" thought our mendicant. "Is yon eaves-dropper one of death's unlicensed ministers? Has he received the retaining fee of some impatient heir, who pants to possess the wealth of the unlucky knave who comes strolling along yonder so careless and unconscious? — Be not so confident, honest friend! I'm at your elbow."

He retired further into the shade, and silently and slowly drew near the lurker, who stirred not from his place. The stranger had already passed them, when the concealed villain sprang suddenly upon him, raised his right hand in which a poniard was gleaming, and before he could give the blow was felled to the earth by the arm of the mendicant.

The stranger turned hastily towards them; the bravo started up, and fled; the beggar smiled.

"How now?" cried the stranger; "what does all this mean?"

"Oh! 'tis a mere jest, signor, which has only preserved your life."

"What! My life? How so?"

"The honest gentleman who has just taken to his heels stole behind you with true cat-like caution, and had already raised his dagger, when I saw him. You owe your life to me, and the service is richly worth one little piece of money! Give me some alms, signor, for, on my soul, I am hungry, thirsty, cold!"

"Hence, scurvy companion! I know you and your tricks too well. This is all a concerted scheme between you — a design upon my purse — an attempt to procure both money and thanks under the lame pretence of having saved me from an assassin. Go, fellow, go! practise these dainty devices on the doge's credulity, if you will; but with Buonarotti you stand no chance, believe me."

The wretched, starving beggar stood like one petrified, and gazed on the taunting stranger.

"No, as I have a soul to save, signor, 'tis no lie that I tell you!—'tis the plain truth; have compassion, or I die this night of hunger."

"Begone this instant, I say, or by Heaven——"

The unfeeling man here drew out a concealed pistol, and pointed it at his preserver.

"Merciful Heaven! and is it thus that services are acknowledged in Venice?"

"The watch is at no great distance; I need only raise my voice, and——"

"Hell and confusion! Do you take me for a robber, then?"

"Make no noise, I tell you! Be quiet, you had better!"

"Hark you, signor. Buonarotti is your name, I think? I will write it down, as belonging to the second scoundrel I have met in Venice."

He paused for a moment; then continuing in a dreadful voice,—"And when," said he, "thou, Buonarotti, shalt hereafter hear the name of *Abellino — tremble!*"

Abellino turned away, and left the hard-hearted Venetian.

CHAPTER II.

THE BANDITTI.

And now rushed the unfortunate wildly through the streets of Venice: he railed at fortune; he laughed and cursed by turns; yet sometimes he suddenly stood still, seemed as pondering on some great and wondrous enterprise, and then again rushed onwards, as if hastening to its execution.

Propped against a column of the Signoria, he counted

over the whole sum of his misfortunes. His wandering eyeballs seemed to seek comfort; but they found it not.

"Fate," he at length exclaimed, in a paroxysm of despair,—"fate has condemned me to be either the wildest of adventurers—or one, at the relation of whose crimes the world must shudder! To astonish is my destiny: Rosalvo can know no medium; Rosalvo can never act like common men! Is it not the hand of fate which has led me hither? Who could have ever dreamt, that the son of the richest lord in Naples should have depended for a beggar's alms on Venetian charity! *I*—*I*, who feel myself possessed of strength of body and energy of soul fit for executing the most daring deeds—behold me creeping in rags through the streets of this inhospitable city, and torturing my wits in vain to discover some means by which I may rescue life from the jaws of famine! Those men, whom my munificence nourished, who at my table bathed their worthless souls in the choicest wine of Cyprus, and glutted themselves with every delicacy which the globe's four quarters could supply, those very men now deny to my necessity even a miserable crust of mouldy bread. Oh, that is dreadful, cruel! Cruel of men! cruel of Heaven!"

He paused; he folded his arms, and sighed.

"Yet will I bear it! I will submit to my destiny! I will traverse every path, and go through every degree of human wretchedness; and whatever may be my fate, I will be still *myself;* and whatever may be my fate, I will still act *greatly!* Away, then, with the Count Rosalvo, whom once all Naples idolised; now—now am I the *beggar Abellino!*—A beggar?—that name stands *last* in the scale of worldly rank, but *first* in the list of the famishing, the outcast, and the unworthy."

Something rustled near him—Abellino gazed around. He was aware of the Bravo, whom he had struck to the ground that night, and whom two companions of a similar stamp had now joined. As they advanced, they cast enquiring glances around them. They were in search of some one.

"It is of *thee* that they are in search," said Abellino, then advanced a few steps, and whistled.

The ruffians stood still — they whispered together, and seemed to be undecided.

Abellino whistled a second time.

"'T is he!" could he hear one of them say distinctly; and in a moment after they advanced slowly towards him.

Abellino kept his place, but unsheathed his sword. The three unknown (they were masked) stopped a few paces from him.

"How now, fellow?" quoth one of them. "What is the matter? Why stand you on your guard?"

Abellino. "It is as well that you should be made to keep your distance, for I *know* you; you are certain honest gentlemen, who live by taking away the lives of others."

First Ruffian. "Was not your whistling addressed to *us?*"

Abellino. "It was."

A Ruffian. "And what would you with us?"

Abellino. "Hear me! I am a miserable wretch, and starving; give me an alms out of your booty!"

A Ruffian. "An alms? Ha! ha! ha! By my soul, that is whimsical! Alms from us, indeed! Oh, by all means! No doubt, you shall have alms in plenty!"

Abellino. "Or else give me fifty sequins, and I 'll bind myself to your service, till I shall have worked out my debt."

A Ruffian. "Ay? And pray, then, who may you be?"

Abellino. "A starving wretch; the republic holds none more miserable. Such am I *at present;* but hereafter — I have powers, knaves — this arm could pierce a heart, though guarded by three breastplates; this eye, though surrounded by Egyptian darkness, could still see to stab sure."

A Ruffian. "Why then did you strike me down even now?"

Abellino. "In the hope of being paid for it; but though I saved his life, the scoundrel gave me not a single ducat."

A Ruffian. "No? So much the better. But hark ye, comrade! are you sincere?"

Abellino. "Despair never lies."

A Ruffian. "Slave, shouldst thou be a traitor ——"

Abellino. "My heart would be within reach of your hands, and your daggers would be as sharp as now."

The three dangerous companions again whispered among themselves for a few moments, after which they returned their daggers into the sheath.

"Come on, then," said one of them; "follow us to our home. It were unwise to talk over certain matters in the open street."

"I follow you," was Abellino's answer; "but tremble, should any one of you dare to treat me as a foe. Comrade, forgive me that I gave your ribs somewhat too hard a squeeze just now; I will be your sworn brother in recompense."

"We are on honour," cried the banditti with one voice; "no harm shall happen to you: he, who does *you* an injury, shall be to *us* as a foe. A fellow of your humour suits us well: follow us, and fear not."

And on they went, Abellino marching between two of them. Frequent were the looks of suspicion which he cast around him; but no ill design was perceptible in the banditti. They guided him onwards, till they reached a canal, loosened a gondola, placed themselves in it, and rowed, till they had gained the most remote quarter of Venice. They landed, threaded several by-streets, and at length knocked at the door of a house of inviting appearance. It was opened by a young woman, who conducted them into a plain but comfortable chamber; many were the looks of surprise and enquiry which she cast on the bewildered, half-pleased, half-anxious Abellino, who knew not whither he had been conveyed, and still thought it unsafe to confide entirely in the promises of the banditti.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRIAL OF STRENGTH.

SCARCELY were the bravos seated, when Cinthia (for that was the young woman's name) was again summoned to the door; and the company was now increased by two new-comers, who examined their unknown guest from head to foot.

"Now then," cried one of those who had conducted Abellino to this respectable society, "let us see what you are like."

As he said this, he raised a burning lamp from the table, and the light of its flame was thrown full upon Abellino's countenance.

"Lord, forgive me my sins!" screamed Cinthia: "out upon him! what an ugly hound it is!"

She turned hastily round, and hid her face with her hands. Dreadful was the look with which Abellino repaid her compliment.

"Knave," said one of the banditti, "nature's own hand has marked you out for an assassin. Come, prithee be frank, and tell us how thou hast contrived so long to escape the gibbet? In what gaol didst thou leave thy last fetters? Or from what galley hast thou taken thy departure, without staying to say adieu?"

Abellino folded his arms. "If I be such as you describe," said he, with an air of authority, and in a voice which made his hearers tremble, "'t is for me all the better. Whate'er may be my future mode of life, Heaven can have no right to find fault with it, since it was for that it formed and fitted me."

The five bravos stepped aside, and consulted together: the subject of their conference is easy to be divined. In the meanwhile Abellino remained quiet and indifferent to what was passing.

After a few minutes they again approached him: one, whose countenance was the most ferocious, and whose

form exhibited the greatest marks of muscular strength, advanced a few paces before the rest, and addressed Abellino as follows: —

"Hear me, comrade. In Venice there exist but five banditti; you see them before you: wilt thou be the sixth? doubt not, thou wilt find sufficient employment. My name is Matteo, and I am the father of the band: that sturdy fellow with the red locks is called Baluzzo; he, whose eyes twinkle like a cat's, is Thomaso, an arch knave I promise you! 'T was Pietrino whose bones you handled so roughly to-night; and yon thick-lipped Colossus, who stands next to Cinthia, is named Struzza. Now, then, you know us all; and since you are a penniless devil, we are willing to incorporate you in our society; but we must first be assured that you mean honestly by us."

Abellino smiled, or rather grinned, and murmured hoarsely, "I am starving!"

"Answer, fellow! Dost thou mean honestly by us?"

"That must the event decide."

"Mark me, knave; the first suspicion of treachery costs you your life. Take shelter in the doge's palace, and girdle yourself round with all the power of the republic — though clasped in the doge's arms, and protected by a hundred cannons, still would we murder you! Fly to the high altar; press the crucifix to your bosom; and even at mid-day, still would we murder you! Think on this well, fellow, and forget not, we are *banditti!*"

"You need not tell me that. But give me some food, and then I'll prate with you as long as you please — at present I am starving! Four and twenty hours have elapsed since I last tasted nourishment."

Cinthia now covered a small table with her best provisions, and filled several silver goblets with delicious wine.

"If one could but look at him without disgust!" murmured Cinthia; "if he had but the appearance of something human! Satan must certainly have appeared to his mother, while she was big with him, and thence came her child into the world with such a frightful countenance!

Ugh! It's an absolute mask, only that I never saw a mask so hideous!"

Abellino heeded her not: he placed himself at the table, and ate and drank as if he would have satisfied himself for the next six months. The banditti eyed him with looks of satisfaction, and congratulated each other on such a valuable acquisition.

If the reader is curious to know what this same Abellino was like, he must picture to himself a young stout fellow, whose limbs, perhaps, might have been thought not ill-formed, had not the most horrible countenance that ever was invented by a caricaturist, or that Milton could have adapted to the ugliest of his fallen angels, entirely marred the advantages of his person. Black and shining, but long and straight, his hair flew wildly about his brown neck and yellow face. His mouth was so wide, that his gums and discoloured teeth were visible, and a kind of convulsive twist, which scarcely ever was at rest, had formed its expression into an eternal grin. His eye (for he had but one) was sunk deep in his head, and little more than the white of it was visible; and even that little was overshadowed by the protrusion of his dark and bushy eyebrow. In the union of his features were found collected in one hideous assemblage all the most coarse and uncouth traits which ever had been exhibited singly in wooden cuts; and the observer was left in doubt, whether this repulsive physiognomy expressed stupidity of intellect, or maliciousness of heart, or whether it implied them both together.

"Now, then, I am satisfied," roared Abellino, and dashed the still full goblet upon the ground. "Speak! what would you know of me? I am ready to give you answers."

"The first thing," replied Matteo,—"the first thing necessary is to give us a proof of your strength, for this is of material importance in our undertakings. Are you good at wrestling?"

"I know not: try me."

"Cinthia, remove the table. Now then, Abellino, which of us will you undertake? Whom among us, dost think,

thou canst knock down as easy as yon poor dabbler in the art, Pietrino?"

"Which of you?" cried Abellino; "all of you together, and half a dozen more such pitiful scoundrels!" And he sprang from his seat, threw his sword on the table, and measured the strength of his antagonists with his single eye.

The banditti burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"Now then," cried Abellino, fiercely; "now then for the trial! Why come you not on?"

"Fellow," replied Matteo, "take my advice; try first, what you can do with me alone, and learn what sort of men you have to manage. Think you, we are marrowless boys, or delicate signors?"

Abellino answered him by a scornful laugh. Matteo became furious: his companions shouted aloud, and clapped their hands.

"To business!" said Abellino; "I'm now in a right humour for sport! Look to yourselves, my lads!" And in the same instant he collected his forces together, threw the gigantic Matteo over his head as if he had been an infant, knocked Struzza down on the right hand, and Pietrino on the left, tumbled Thomaso to the end of the room head over heels, and stretched Baluzzo without animation upon the neighbouring benches.

Three minutes elapsed, ere the subdued bravos could recover themselves; loud shouted Abellino, while the astonished Cinthia gazed and trembled at the terrible exhibition.

"By the blood of St. Januarius," cried Matteo at length, rubbing his battered joints, "the fellow is our master. Cinthia, take care to give him our best chamber."

"He must have made a compact with the devil!" grumbled Thomaso, and forced his dislocated wrist back into its socket.

No one seemed inclined to hazard a second trial of strength.

The night was far advanced, or rather the grey of morning already was visible over the sea. The banditti separated, and each retired to his chamber.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DAGGERS.

Abellino, this Italian Hercules, all terrible as he appeared to be, was not long a member of this society, before his companions felt towards him sentiments of the most unbounded esteem. All loved, all valued him for his extraordinary talents for a bravo's trade, to which he seemed peculiarly adapted, not only by his wonderful strength of body, but by the readiness of his wit, and his never-failing presence of mind. Even Cinthia was inclined to feel some little affection for him, but—he really was too ugly.

Matteo (as Abellino was soon given to understand) was the captain of this dangerous troop. He was one who carried villany to the highest pitch of refinement: he was incapable of fear, quick and crafty, and troubled with less conscience than a French financier. The booty and price of blood, which his associates brought in daily, were always delivered up to him: he gave each man his share, and retained no larger portion for himself than was allotted to the others. The catalogue of those whom he had despatched into the other world was already too long for him to have repeated it: many names had slipped his memory; but his greatest pleasure in his hours of relaxation was to relate such of these murderous anecdotes as he still remembered, in the benevolent intention of inspiring his hearers with a desire to follow his example. His weapons were kept separate from the rest, and occupied a whole apartment. Here were to be found daggers of a thousand different fashions, *with* guards and *without* them; two, three, and four edged. Here were stored air-guns, pistols, and blunderbusses; poisons of various kinds, and operating in various ways; garments fit for every possible disguise, whether to personate the monk, the Jew, or the mendicant, the soldier, the senator, or the gondolier.

One day he summoned Abellino to attend him in this armoury.

"Mark me," said he; "thou wilt turn out a brave fellow, that I can see already. It is now time that you should earn that bread for yourself, which hitherto you have owed to our bounty. Look! here hast thou a dagger of the finest steel; you must charge for its use by the inch. If you plunge it only one inch deep into the bosom of his foe, your employer must reward you with only one sequin: if two inches, with ten sequins; if three, with twenty; if the whole dagger, you may then name your own price. Here is next a glass poniard; whomever this pierces, that man's death is certain. As soon as the blow is given, you must break the dagger in the wound; the flesh will close over the point which has been broken off, and which will keep its quarters till the day of resurrection! Lastly, observe this metallic dagger; its cavity conceals a subtile poison, which, whenever you touch this spring, will immediately infuse death into the veins of him whom the weapon's point hath wounded. Take these daggers; in giving them I present you with a capital, capable of bringing home to you most heavy and most precious interest."

Abellino received the instruments of death, but his hand shook as it grasped them.

"Possessed of such unfailing weapons, of what immense sums must your robberies have made you master!"

"Scoundrel!" interrupted Matteo, frowning and offended, "among us robbery is unknown. What? Dost take us for common plunderers, for mere thieves, cutpurses, housebreakers, and villains of that low miserable stamp?"

"Perhaps what you wish me to take you for is something worse; for to speak openly, Matteo, villains of that stamp are contented with plundering a purse or a casket, which can easily be filled again; but that which *we* take from others is a jewel, which a man never has but once, and which once stolen can never be replaced. Are we not then a thousand times more atrocious plunderers?"

"By the house at Loretto, I think you have a mind to moralise, Abellino?"

"Hark ye, Matteo, only one question; at the day of judgment, which think you will hold his head highest, the thief or the assassin?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Think not that Abellino speaks thus from want of resolution. Speak but the word, and I murder half the senators of Venice; but still ——"

"Fool! know, the bravo must be above crediting the nurse's antiquated tales of vice and virtue. What is virtue? what is vice? Nothing, but such things as forms of government, custom, manners, and education have made sacred; and that which men are able to make honourable at one time, it is in their power to make dishonourable at another, whenever the humour takes them. Had not the senate forbidden us to give opinions freely respecting the politics of Venice, there would have been nothing wrong in giving such opinions; and were the senate to declare that it is right to give such opinions, that which to-day is thought a crime would be thought meritorious to-morrow. Then, prithee, let us have no more of such doubts as these. We are men, as much as are the doge and his senators, and have reason as much as *they* have to lay down the law of right and wrong, and to alter the law of right and wrong; and to decree what shall be vice, and what shall be virtue."

Abellino laughed: Matteo proceeded with increased animation.

"Perhaps you will tell me, that our trade is *dishonourable!* And what, then, is the thing called *honour?* 'T is a word; an empty sound; a mere fantastic creature of the imagination! Ask, as you traverse some frequented street, in what honour consists? The usurer will answer, 'To be honourable is to be rich; and he has most honour who can heap up the greatest quantity of sequins.'— 'By no means,' cries the voluptuary: 'honour consists in being beloved by every handsome woman, and finding no virtue proof against your attacks.' — 'How mistaken!' interrupts the general; 'to conquer whole cities, to de-

stroy whole armies, to ruin whole provinces, *that*, indeed, brings *real* honour!' The man of learning places his renown in the number of pages which he has either written or read; the tinker, in the number of pots and kettles which he has made or mended; the nun, in the number of *good* things which she has done, or *bad* things which she has resisted. The coquette, in the list of her admirers; the republic, in the extent of her provinces; and thus, my friend, every one thinks that honour consists in something different from the rest; and why, then, should not the bravo think that honour consists in reaching the perfection of his trade; and in guiding a dagger to the heart of an enemy with unerring aim?"

"By my life, 't is a pity, Matteo, that you should be a bravo; the schools have lost an excellent teacher of philosophy!"

"Do you think so? Why, the fact is thus, Abellino: I was educated in a monastery; my father was a dignified prelate in Lucca, and my mother a nun of the Ursuline order, greatly respected for her chastity and devotion. Now, signor, it was thought fitting that I should apply closely to my studies: my father, good man, would fain have made me a light of the church; but I soon found, that I was better qualified for an incendiary's torch. I followed the bent of my genius; yet count I not my studies thrown away, since they taught me more philosophy than to tremble at phantoms created by my own imagination. Follow my example, friend; and so farewell."

CHAPTER V.

SOLITUDE.

Abellino had already passed six weeks in Venice, and yet (either from want of opportunity or of inclination) he had suffered his daggers to remain idle in their sheaths. This proceeded partly from his not being as yet sufficiently ac-

quainted with the windings and turnings, the by-lanes and private alleys of the town; and, partly, because he had hitherto found no customers whose murderous designs stood in need of his helping hand.

This want of occupation was irksome to him in the extreme: he panted for action, and was condemned to indolence.

With a melancholy heart did he roam through Venice, and number every step with a sigh. He frequented the public places, the taverns, gardens, and every scene which was dedicated to amusement. But nowhere could he find what he sought — tranquillity.

One evening, he had loitered beyond the other visitants in a public garden, situated on one of the most beautiful of the Venetian islands. He strolled from arbour to arbour, threw himself down on the sea-shore, and watched the play of the waves as they sparkled in the moonshine.

"Four years ago," said he, with a sigh, "just such a heavenly evening was it, that I stole from Valeria's lips the first kiss, and heard from Valeria's lips, for the first time, the avowal that she loved me."

He was silent, and abandoned himself to the melancholy recollections which thronged before his mind's eye.

Every thing around him was so calm, so silent! Not a single zephyr sighed among the blades of grass; but a storm raged in the bosom of Abellino.

"Four years ago could I have believed that a time would come when I should play the part of a bravo in Venice? Oh, where are they flown, the golden hopes and plans of glory which smiled upon me in the happy days of my youth? I am a bravo; to be a beggar were to be something better.

"When my good old father, in the enthusiasm of paternal vanity, so oft threw his arms around my neck, and cried, 'My boy! thou wilt render the name of Rosalvo glorious!' God, as I listened, how was my blood on fire! What thought I not; what felt I not; what that was good and great did I not promise myself to do? The father is dead; and the son — is a Venetian bravo! When my preceptors praised and admired me, and, car-

ried away by the warmth of their feelings, clapped my shoulder, and exclaimed, 'Count, thou wilt immortalise the ancient race of Rosalvo!' Ha! in those blessed moments of sweet delirium, how bright and beauteous stood futurity before me! When, happy in the performance of some good deed, I returned home, and saw Valeria hasten to receive me with open arms; and when, while she clasped me to her bosom, I heard her whisper, 'Oh, who could forbear to love the great Rosalvo?' God! oh, God! Away, away, glorious visions of the past! to look on you drives me mad!"

He was again silent: he bit his lip in fury, raised one emaciated hand to heaven, and struck his forehead violently with the other.

"An assassin! the slave of cowards and rascals! the ally of the greatest villains whom the Venetian sun ever shines upon! Such is now the great Rosalvo. Fie! oh, fie on 't! and yet to this wretched lot hath fatality condemned me."

Suddenly he sprang from the ground, after a long silence. His eyes sparkled; his countenance was changed; he drew his breath easier.

"Yes! by Heaven, yes! Great as Count Rosalvo, that can I be no longer; but from being great as a Venetian bravo, what prevents me? Souls in bliss!" he exclaimed, and sank on his knee, while he raised his folded hands to heaven, as if about to pronounce the most awful oath,—"spirit of my father! spirit of Valeria! I will not become unworthy of you. Hear me, if your ghosts are permitted to wander near me; hear me swear, that the Bravo shall not disgrace his origin, nor render vain the hopes which soothed you in the bitterness of death. No! sure as I live, I will be the only dealer in this miserable trade, and posterity shall be compelled to honour that name which my actions shall render illustrious."

He bowed his forehead till it touched the earth, and his tears flowed plenteously. Vast conceptions swelled his soul: he dwelt on wondrous views till their extent bewildered his brain; yet another hour elapsed, and he sprang from the earth to realise them.

"I will enter into no compact against human nature with five miserable cut-throats. *Alone* will I make the republic tremble; and, before eight days are flown, these murderous knaves shall swing upon a gibbet. Venice shall no longer harbour *five* banditti; *one* — and *one* only — shall inhabit here: and that one shall beard the doge himself; shall watch over right and over wrong; and, according as he judges, shall reward and punish. Before eight days are flown, the state shall be purified from the presence of these outcasts of humanity; and then shall *I* stand here alone. Then must every villain in Venice, who hitherto has kept the daggers of my companions in employment, have recourse to *me:* then shall I know the names and persons of all those cowardly murderers — of all those illustrious profligates — with whom Matteo and his companions carry on the trade of blood; and then, — Abellino! — Abellino! — *that* is the name. Hear it, Venice; hear it, and tremble!"

Intoxicated with the wildness of his hopes, he rushed out of the garden; he summoned a gondolier, threw himself into the boat, and hastened to the dwelling of Cinthia, where the inhabitants already were folded in the arms of sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

ROSABELLA, THE DOGE'S LOVELY NIECE.

"Hark, comrade," said Matteo the next morning to Abellino; "to-day thou shalt make thy first step in our profession."

"To-day?" hoarsely murmured Abellino; "and on whom am I to show my skill?"

"Nay, to say truth, 'tis but a woman; but one must not give too difficult a task to a young beginner. I will myself accompany you, and see how you conduct yourself in this first trial."

"Hum!" said Abellino, and measured Matteo with his eye from head to foot.

"To-day about four o'clock thou shalt follow me to Dolabella's gardens, which are situated on the south side of Venice; we must both be disguised, you understand. In these gardens are excellent baths; and after using these baths, the doge's niece, the lovely Rosabella of Corfu, frequently walks without attendants. And then — you conceive me?"

"And *you* will accompany me?"

"I will be a spectator of your first adventure; 't is thus I deal by every one."

"And how many inches deep must I plunge my dagger?"

"To the hilt, boy, to the very hilt! Her death is required, and the payment will be princely; Rosabella in the grave, we are rich for life."

Every other point was soon adjusted. Noon was now past, the clock in the neighbouring church of the Benedictines struck four, and Matteo and Abellino were already forth.

They arrived at the gardens of Dolabella, which that day were unusually crowded. Every shady avenue was thronged with people of both sexes; every arbour was occupied by the persons most distinguished in Venice; in every corner sighed love-sick couples, as they waited for the wished approach of twilight; and on every side did strains of vocal and instrumental music pour their harmony on the enchanted ear.

Abellino mingled with the crowd. A most respectable-looking peruke concealed the repulsive ugliness of his features; he imitated the walk and manners of a gouty old man, and supported himself by a crutch, as he walked slowly through the assembly. His habit, richly embroidered, procured for him universally a good reception, and no one scrupled to enter into conversation with him respecting the weather, the commerce of the republic, or the designs of its enemies; and on none of these subjects was Abellino found incapable of sustaining the discourse.

By these means he soon contrived to gain intelligence that Rosabella was certainly in the gardens, how she was

habited, and in what quarter he was most likely to find her.

Thither he immediately bent his course; and hard at his heels followed Matteo.

Alone and in the most retired arbour sat Rosabella of Corfu, the fairest maid in Venice.

Abellino drew near the arbour; he tottered, as he passed its entrance, like one oppressed with sudden faintness, and attracted Rosabella's attention.

"Alas! alas!" cried he, "is there no one at hand, who will take compassion on the infirmity of a poor old man?"

The doge's fair niece quitted the arbour hastily, and flew to give assistance to the sufferer.

"What ails you, my good father?" she enquired in a melodious voice, and with a look of benevolent anxiety.

Abellino pointed towards the arbour; Rosabella led him in, and placed him on a seat of turf.

"God reward you, lady!" stammered Abellino faintly; he raised his eyes; they met Rosabella's, and a blush crimsoned his pale cheeks.

Rosabella stood in silence before the disguised assassin, and trembled with tender concern for the old man's illness; and oh! that expression of interest ever makes a lovely woman look so much *more* lovely! She bent her delicate form over the man who was bribed to murder her, and after a while asked him in the gentlest tone,—"Are you not better?"

"Better?" stammered the deceiver with a feeble voice; —"better?—oh, yes, yes, yes! You — you are the doge's niece? the noble Rosabella of Corfu?"

"The same, my good old man."

"Oh, lady—I have somewhat to tell you.—Be on your guard—start not—what I would say is of the utmost consequence, and demands the greatest prudence.—Ah! God, that there should live men so cruel—lady, your life is in danger."

The maiden started back; the colour fled from her cheeks

"Do you wish to behold your assassin? You shall not die, but if you value your life, be silent."

Rosabella knew not what to think; the presence of the old man terrified her.

"Fear nothing, lady, fear nothing; you have nothing to fear, while I am with you. Before you quit this arbour, you shall see the assassin expire at your feet."

Rosabella made a movement, as if she would have fled; but suddenly the person who sat beside her was no longer an infirm old man. He, who a minute before had scarcely strength to mutter out a few sentences, and reclined against the arbour trembling like an aspen, sprang up with the force of a giant, and drew her back with one arm.

"For the love of Heaven," she cried, "release me! Let me fly."

"Lady, fear nothing; *I* protect you." Thus said, Abellino placed a whistle at his lips, and blew it shrilly.

Instantly sprang Matteo from his concealment in a neighbouring clump of trees, and rushed into the arbour. Abellino threw Rosabella on the bank of turf, advanced a few steps to meet Matteo, and plunged his dagger in his heart.

Without uttering a single cry sank the banditti-captain at the feet of Abellino; the death-rattle was heard in his throat, and after a few horrible convulsions all was over.

Now did Matteo's murderer look again towards the arbour, and beheld Rosabella half senseless, as she lay on the bank of turf.

"Your life is safe, beautiful Rosabella," said he; "there lies the villain bleeding, who conducted me hither to murder you. Recover yourself; return to your uncle the doge, and tell him, that you owe your life to Abellino."

Rosabella could not speak. Tremblingly she stretched her arms towards him, grasped his hand, and pressed it to her lips in silent gratitude.

Abellino gazed with delight and wonder on the lovely sufferer; and in such a situation who could have beheld her without emotion? Rosabella had scarcely numbered seventeen summers; her light and delicate limbs, enveloped in a thin white garment which fell around her in a thou

sand folds; her blue and melting eyes, whence beamed the expression of purest innocence; her forehead, white as ivory, overshadowed by the ringlets of her bright dark hair; cheeks, whence terror had now stolen the roses; lips, which a seducer had never poisoned with his kisses; such was Rosabella, a creature in whose formation partial nature seemed to have omitted nothing which might constitute the perfection of female loveliness.—Such was she; and being such, the wretched Abellino may be forgiven, if for some few minutes he stood like one enchanted, and bartered for those few minutes the tranquillity of his heart for ever.

"By Him who made me," cried he at length, "oh, thou art fair, Rosabella; Valeria was not fairer!"

He bowed himself down to her, and imprinted a burning kiss on the pale cheeks of the beauty.

"Leave me, thou dreadful man!" she stammered in terror; "oh, leave me!"

"Ah, Rosabella, why art thou so beauteous, and why am I—Knowest thou who kissed thy cheek, Rosabella? Go! tell thy uncle, the proud doge, *'Twas the bravo Abellino.*"

He said, and rushed out of the arbour.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BRAVO'S BRIDE.

It was not without good reason that Abellino took his departure in such haste. He had quitted the spot but a few minutes, when a large party accidentally strolled that way, and discovered with astonishment the corse of Matteo, and Rosabella pale and trembling in the arbour.

A crowd immediately collected itself round them. It increased with every moment, and Rosabella was necessitated to repeat what had happened to her for the satisfaction of every new comer.

In the mean while some of the doge's courtiers, who happened to be among the crowd, hastened to call her attendants together; her gondola was already waiting for her, and the terrified girl soon reached her uncle's palace in safety.

In vain was an embargo laid upon every other gondola; in vain did they examine every person who was in the gardens of Dolabella at the time when the murdered assassin was first discovered—no traces could be found of Abellino.

The report of this strange adventure spread like wildfire through Venice. Abellino—for Rosabella had preserved but too well in her memory that dreadful name, and by the relation of her danger had given it universal publicity—Abellino was the object of general wonder and curiosity. Every one pitied the poor Rosabella for what she had suffered, execrated the villain who had bribed Matteo to murder her, and endeavoured to connect the different circumstances together by the help of one hypothesis or other, among which it would have been difficult to decide which was the most improbable.

Every one who heard the adventure told it again, and every one who told it added something of his own; till at length it was made into a complete romantic novel, which might have been entitled, with great propriety, "The Power of Beauty;" for the Venetian gentlemen and ladies had settled the point among themselves, completely to their own satisfaction, that Abellino would undoubtedly have assassinated Rosabella, had he not been prevented by her uncommon beauty. But though Abellino's interference had preserved her life, it was doubted much whether this adventure would be at all relished by her destined bridegroom, the Prince of Monaldeschi, a Neapolitan of the first rank, possessed of immense wealth and extensive influence. The doge had for some time been secretly engaged in negotiating a match between his niece and this powerful nobleman, who was soon expected to make his appearance at Venice. The motive of his journey, in spite of all the doge's precautions, had been divulged, and it was no longer a secret to any but Rosabella, who had never seen

the prince, and could not imagine why his expected visit should excite such general curiosity.

Thus far the story had been told much to Rosabella's credit; but at length the women began to envy her for her share in the adventure. The kiss which she had received from the Bravo afforded them an excellent opportunity for throwing out a few malicious insinuations. — "She received a great service," said one, "and there's no saying how far the fair Rosabella, in the warmth of gratitude, may have been carried in rewarding her preserver!" —"Very true," observed another; "and for my part I think it not very likely that the fellow, being alone with a pretty girl whose life he had just saved, should have gone away contented with a single kiss!"—"Come, come," interrupted a third, "do not let us judge uncharitably: the fact may be exactly as the lady relates it; though I *must* say that gentlemen of Abellino's profession are not usually so pretty behaved, and that this is the first time I ever heard of a bravo in the platonics."

In short, Rosabella and the horrible Abellino furnished the indolent and gossiping Venetians with conversation so long, that at length the doge's niece was universally known by the honourable appellation of "The Bravo's Bride."

But no one gave himself more trouble about this affair than the doge, the good but proud Andreas. He immediately issued orders that every person of suspicious appearance should be watched more closely than ever; the night patroles were doubled; and spies were employed daily in procuring intelligence of Abellino; and yet was all in vain. Abellino's retreat was inscrutable.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONSPIRACY.

"Confusion!" exclaimed Parozzi, a Venetian nobleman of the first rank, as he paced his chamber with a disor-

dered air on the morning after Matteo's murder: "now all curses light upon the villain's awkwardness! Yet it seems inconceivable to me, how all this should have fallen out so untowardly! Has any one discovered my designs? I know well that Verrino loves Rosabella; was it he who opposed this confounded Abellino to Matteo, and charged him to mar my plans against her? That seems likely. And now, when the doge enquires who it was that employed assassins to murder his niece, what other will be suspected than Parozzi, the discontented lover to whom Rosabella refused her hand, and whom Andreas hates past hope of reconciliation? And now having once found the scent — Parozzi! Parozzi! should the crafty Andreas get an insight into your plans — should he learn that you have placed yourself at the head of a troop of hair-brained youths, — hair-brained may I well call children, who, in order to avoid the rod, set fire to their paternal mansion — Parozzi, should all this be revealed to Andreas ——"

Here his reflections were interrupted. Memmo, Falieri, and Contarino entered the room, three young Venetians of the highest rank, Parozzi's inseparable companions, men depraved both in mind and body, spendthrifts, voluptuaries, well known to every usurer in Venice, and owing more than their paternal inheritance would ever admit of their paying.

"Why, how is this, Parozzi?" cried Memmo, as he entered (a wretch whose every feature exhibited marks of that libertinism to which his life had been dedicated): "I can scarce recover myself from my astonishment! For Heaven's sake is this report true? Did you really hire Matteo to murder the doge's niece?"

"I?" exclaimed Parozzi, and hastily turned away to hide the deadly paleness which overspread his countenance; "why should you suppose that any such design — surely, Memmo, you are distracted."

Memmo. "By my soul, I speak but the plain matter of fact. Nay, only ask Falieri; he can tell you more."

Falieri. "Faith, it's certain, Parozzi, that Lomellino has declared to the doge as a truth beyond doubting, that

you, and none but *you*, were the person who instigated Matteo to attempt Rosabella's life."

Parozzi. "And I tell you again, that Lomellino knows not what he says."

Contarino. "Well, well! only be upon your guard. Andreas is a terrible fellow to deal with."

Falieri. "*He* terrible? I tell you, he is the most contemptible blockhead that the universe can furnish! Courage, perhaps, he possesses, but of brains not an atom."

Contarino. "And *I* tell you, that Andreas is as brave as a lion, and as crafty as a fox."

Falieri. "Psha! psha! Every thing would go to the rack and ruin, were it not for the wiser heads of his triumvirate of counsellors, whom Heaven confound! Deprive him of Paolo Manfrone, Conari, and Lomellino, and the doge would stand there looking as foolish as a school-boy, who was going to be examined, and had forgotten his lesson."

Parozzi. "Falieri is in the right."

Memmo. "Quite, quite!"

Falieri. "And then Andreas is as proud as a beggar grown rich and dressed in his first suit of embroidery! By St. Anthony, he is become quite insupportable! Do you not observe how he increases the number of his attendants daily?"

Memmo. "Nay, that is an undoubted fact."

Contarino. "And then to what an unbounded extent has he carried his influence! The Signoria, the Quaranti, the Procurators of St. Mark, the Avocatori, all think and act exactly as it suits the doge's pleasure and convenience! Every soul of them depends as much on that one man's humour and caprices as puppets do, who nod or shake their wooden heads, just as the fellow behind the curtain thinks proper to move the wires."

Parozzi. "And yet the populace idolises this Andreas!"

Memmo. "Ay, that is the worst part of the story."

Falieri. "But never credit me again if he does not experience a reverse of fortune speedily."

Contarino. "That might happen would we but set our

shoulders to the wheel stoutly. But what do we do? We pass our time in taverns, drink, and game, and throw ourselves headlong into such an ocean of debts, that the best swimmer must sink at last. Let us resolve to make the attempt: let us seek recruits on all sides; let us labour with all our might and main; things must change; or, if they do not, take my word for it, my friends, this world is no longer a world for us."

Memmo. "Nay, it's a melancholy truth, that during the last half year my creditors have been ready to beat my door down with knocking; I am awakened out of my sleep in the morning, and lulled to rest again at night, with no other music than their eternal clamours."

Parozzi. "Ha, ha, ha! As for me, I need not tell you how *I* am situated!"

Falieri. "Had we been less extravagant, we might at this moment have been sitting quietly in our palaces, and — but as things stand now——"

Parozzi. "Well!—'as things stand now'—I verily believe that Falieri is going to moralise!"

Contarino. "That is ever the way with old sinners, when they have lost the power to sin any longer: then they are ready enough to weep over their past life, and talk loudly about repentance and reformation. Now, for my own part, I am perfectly well satisfied with my wanderings from the common beaten paths of morality and prudence. They serve to convince me, that I am not one of your every-day men, who sit cramped up in the chimney-corner, lifeless and phlegmatic, and shudder, when they hear of any extraordinary occurrence. Nature evidently intended me to be a libertine, and I am determined to fulfil my destination. Why, if spirits like ours were not produced every now and then, the world would absolutely go fast asleep: but we rouse it by deranging the old order of things, force mankind to quicken their snail's pace, furnish a million of idlers with riddles which they puzzle their brains about, without being able to comprehend, infuse some few hundreds of new ideas into the heads of the great multitude, and, in short, are as useful to the world as tempests are,

which dissipate those exhalations with which nature otherwise would poison herself."

Falieri. "Excellent sophistry, by my honour! Why, Contarino, ancient Rome has had an irreparable loss in not having numbered you among her orators: it is a pity, though, that there should be so little that 's solid wrapt up in so many fine-sounding words.—Now learn, that while you, with this rare talent of eloquence, have been most unmercifully wearing out the patience of your good-natured hearers, Falieri has been in *action!* The Cardinal Gonzaga is discontented with the government: Heaven knows what Andreas has done to him to make him so vehemently his enemy; but, in short, Gonzaga now belongs to our party."

Parozzi (*with astonishment and delight*). "Falieri, are you in your senses?—The Cardinal Gonzaga?"

Falieri. "Is ours, and ours both body and soul. I confess I was first obliged to rhodomontade a good deal to him about our patriotism, our glorious designs, our love for freedom, and so forth; in short, Gonzaga is a hypocrite, and therefore is Gonzaga the fitter for us."

Contarino (*clasping Falieri's hand*). "Bravo, my friend! Venice shall see a second edition of Catiline's conspiracy. Now then it is *my* turn to speak, for I have not been idle since we parted. In truth, I have as yet *caught* nothing, but I have made myself master of an all-powerful net, with which I doubt not to capture the best half of Venice. You all know the Marchioness Olympia?"

Parozzi. "Does not each of us keep a list of the handsomest women in the republic, and can we have forgotten number one?"

Falieri. "Olympia and Rosabella are the goddesses of Venice: our youths burn incense on no other altars."

Contarino. "Olympia is my own.

Falieri. "How?"

Parozzi. "Olympia?"

Contarino. "Why how now? Why stare ye, as had I prophesied to you that the skies were going to fall? I tell you Olympia's heart is mine, and that I possess her entire and most intimate confidence. Our connection must

remain a profound secret; but depend on it, whatever *I* wish, *she* wishes also, and you know she can make half the nobility in Venice dance to the sound of her pipe, let her play what tune she pleases."

Parozzi. "Contarino, you are our master."

Contarino. "And you had not the least suspicion how powerful an ally I was labouring to procure for you?"

Parozzi. "I must blush for myself while I listen to you, since as yet I have done nothing. Yet this I must say in my excuse; had Matteo, bribed by my gold, accomplished Rosabella's murder, the doge would have been robbed of that chain with which he holds the chief men in Venice attached to his government. Andreas would have no merit were Rosabella once removed. The most illustrious families would care no longer for his friendship, were their hopes of a connection with him by means of his niece buried in her grave. Rosabella will one day be the doge's heiress."

Memmo. "All that I can do for you in this business is to provide you with pecuniary supplies. My old miserable uncle, whose whole property becomes mine at his death, has brimful coffers, and the old miser dies whenever I say the word."

Falieri. "You have suffered him to live too long already."

Memmo. "Why, I never have been able to make up my mind entirely to—— You would scarcely believe it, friends, but at times I am so hypochondriac, that I could almost fancy I feel twinges of conscience."

Contarino. "Indeed! Then take my advice, go into a monastery."

Memmo. "Yes, truly, that would suit me to a hair!"

Falieri. "Our first care must be to find out our old acquaintances, Matteo's companions; yet having hitherto always transacted business with them through their captain, I know not where they are to be met with."

Parozzi. "As soon as they are found, their first employment must be the removal of the doge's trio of advisers."

Contarino. "That were an excellent idea, if it were but

as easily done as said. Well, then, my friends, this principal point at least is decided. Either we will bury our debts under the ruins of the existing constitution of the republic, or make Andreas a gift of our heads towards strengthening the walls of the building. In either case we shall at least obtain quiet. Necessity, with her whip of serpents, has driven us to the very highest point of her rock, whence we must save ourselves by some act of extraordinary daring, or be precipitated, on the opposite side, into the abyss of shame and eternal oblivion. The next point to be considered is, how we may best obtain supplies for our necessary expenses, and induce others to join with us in our plans. For this purpose we must use every artifice to secure in our interests the courtesans of the greatest celebrity in Venice. What *we* should be unable to effect by every power of persuasion, banditti by their daggers, and princes by their treasuries, can one of those Phrynes accomplish with a single look. Where the terrors of the scaffold are without effect, and the priest's exhortations are heard with coldness, a wanton kiss and a tender promise often perform wonders. The most vigilant fidelity drops to sleep on the voluptuous bosoms of these witches: the warmth of their kisses can thaw the lips of secrecy itself; and the bell which sounded the hour of assignation has often rang the knell of the most sacred principles and most steadfast resolutions. But should you either fail to gain the mastery over the minds of these women, or fear to be yourselves entangled in the nets which you wish to spread for others, in these cases you must have recourse to the holy father-confessors. Flatter the pride of these insolent friars; paint for them upon the blank leaf of futurity bishop's mitres, patriarchal missions, the hats of cardinals, and the keys of St. Peter; my life upon it, they will spring at the bait, and you will have them completely at your disposal. These hypocrites, who govern the consciences of the bigoted Venetians, hold man and woman, the noble and the mendicant, the doge and the gondolier, bound fast in the chains of superstition, by which they can lead them wheresoever it best suits their pleasure. It will save us tons of gold in gaining over pro-

selytes and keeping their consciences quiet when gained, if we can but obtain the assistance of the confessors, whose blessings and curses pass with the multitude for current coin. Now then to work, comrades, and so farewell."

CHAPTER IX.

CINTHIA'S DWELLING.

SCARCELY had Abellino achieved the bloody deed, which employed every tongue in Venice, than he changed his dress and whole appearance with so much expedition and success as to prevent the slightest suspicion of his being Matteo's murderer. He quitted the gardens unquestioned, nor left the least trace which could lead to a discovery.

He arrived at Cinthia's dwelling. It was already evening. Cinthia opened the door, and Abellino entered the common apartment.

"Where are the rest?" said he, in a savage tone of voice, whose sound made Cinthia tremble.

"They have been asleep," she answered, "since midday. Probably they mean to go out on some pursuit to-night."

Abellino threw himself into a chair, and seemed to be lost in thought.

"But why are you always so gloomy, Abellino," said Cinthia, drawing near him: "it's that which makes you so ugly. Prithee away with those frowns: they make your countenance look worse than nature made it."

Abellino gave no answer.

"Really you are enough to frighten a body! Come now, let us be friends, Abellino: I begin not to dislike you, and to endure your appearance; and I don't know but ——"

"Go! wake the sleepers," roared the Bravo.

"The sleepers? Psha! let them sleep on, the stupid rogues. Surely you are not afraid to be alone with me?

Mercy on me, one would think I looked as terrible as yourself. Do I? Nay, look on me, Abellino!"

Cinthia, to say the truth, was by no means an ill-looking girl; her eyes were bright and expressive; her hair fell in shining ringlets over her bosom; her lips were red and full, and she bowed them towards Abellino's; but Abellino's were still sacred by the touch of Rosabella's cheek. He started from his seat, and removed (yet gently) Cinthia's hand, which rested on his shoulder.

"Wake the sleepers, my good girl," said he; "I must speak with them this moment."

Cinthia hesitated.

"Nay, go!" said he in a fierce voice.

Cinthia retired in silence; yet as she crossed the threshold, she stopped for an instant and menaced him with her finger.

Abellino strode through the chamber with hasty steps, his head reclining on his shoulder, his arms folded over his breast.

"The first step is taken," said he to himself; "there is one moral monster the less on earth. I have committed no sin by this murder; I have but performed a sacred duty. Aid me, thou Great and Good, for arduous is the task before me. Ah! should that task be gone through with success, and Rosabella be the reward of my labours.—Rosabella? What! shall the Doge's niece bestow on the outcast Abellino—Oh, madman that I am to hope it, never can I reach the goal of my wishes! No! never was there frenzy to equal mine! To attach myself at first sight to — yet Rosabella alone is capable of thus enchanting at first sight! Rosabella and Valeria! To be beloved by two such women. Yet though it is impossible to attain, the *striving* to attain such an end is glorious! Illusions so delightful will at least make me happy for a moment; and, alas! the wretched Abellino sadly needs illusions that even for a moment will make him happy! Oh, did the world know what I gladly *would* accomplish, the world would both love and pity me!"

Cinthia returned: the four bravos followed her, yawning, grumbling, and still half asleep.

"Come, come," said Abellino; "rouse yourselves, lads. Before I say any thing, be convinced that you are wide awake, for what I am going to tell you is so strange, that you would scarce believe it in a dream."

They listened to him with an air of indifference and impatience.

"Why, what's the matter now?" said Thomaso, while he stretched himself.

"Neither more nor less than that our honest, hearty, brave Matteo — is murdered!"

"What! murdered?" every one exclaimed, and gazed with looks of terror on the bearer of this unwelcome news; while Cinthia gave a loud scream, and clasping her hands together, sank almost breathless into a chair.

A general silence prevailed for some time.

"Murdered?" at length repeated Thomaso; "and by whom?"

Baluzzo. "Where?"

Pietrino. "What, this forenoon?"

Abellino. "In the gardens of Dolabella, where he was found bleeding at the feet of the doge's niece. Whether he fell by *her* hand, or that of one of her admirers, I cannot say."

Cinthia (*weeping*). "Poor dear Matteo."

Abellino. "About this time to-morrow you will see his corse exhibited on the gibbet."

Pietrino. "What! did any one recognise him?"

Abellino. "Yes, yes, there's no doubt about his trade, you may depend on't."

Cinthia. "The gibbet! Poor dear Matteo!"

Thomaso. "This is a fine piece of work!"

Baluzzo. "Confound the fellow; who would have thought of any thing happening so unlucky!"

Abellino. "Why how now? you seem to be quite overcome."

Struzza. "I cannot recover myself: surprise and terror have almost stupified me."

Abellino. "Indeed! By my life, when I heard the news I burst into laughter. 'Signor Matteo,' said I, 'I wish your worship joy of your safe arrival.'"

Thomaso. "What?"

Struzza. "You laughed? Hang me if I can see what there is to laugh at."

Abellino. "Why surely you are not afraid of receiving what you are so ready to bestow on others? What is your object? What can we expect as our reward at the end of our labours, except the gibbet or the rack? What memorials of our actions shall we leave behind us, except our skeletons dancing in the air, and the chains which rattle round them? He who chooses to play the bravo's part on the great theatre of the world must not be afraid of death, whether it come at the hands of the physician or of the executioner. Come, come, pluck up your spirits, comrades."

Thomaso. "That's easy to say, but quite out of my power."

Pietrino. "Mercy on me, how my teeth chatter!"

Baluzzo. "Prithee, Abellino, be composed for a moment or two, your gaiety at a time like this is quite horrible."

Cinthia. "Oh me! oh me! Poor murdered Matteo."

Abellino. "Hey-day! Why, what is all this? Cinthia, my life, are you not ashamed of being such a child? Come, let you and I renew that conversation which my sending you to wake these gentlemen interrupted. Sit down by me, sweetheart, and give me a kiss."

Cinthia. "Out upon you, monster!"

Abellino. "What, have you altered your mind, my pretty dear? Well, well; with all my heart! When *you* are in the humour, perhaps *I* may not have the inclination."

Baluzzo. "Death and the devil, Abellino, is this a time for talking nonsense? Prithee keep such trash for a fitter occasion, and let us consider what we are to do just now."

Pietrino. "Nay, this is no season for trifling."

Struzza. "Tell us, Abellino, you are a clever fellow, what course is it best for us to take?"

Abellino (*after a pause*). "Nothing must be done, or a great deal. One of two things we must choose. Either

we must remain *where* we are, and *what* we are — murder honest men to please any rascal who will give us gold and fair words, and make up our minds to be hung, broken on the wheel, condemned to the gallows, burnt alive, crucified, or beheaded, at the long run, just as it may seem best to the supreme authority; or else —— "

Thomaso. " Or else? — well?"

Abellino. " Or else we must divide the spoils which are already in our possession, quit the republic, begin a new and better life, and endeavour to make our peace with Heaven. We have already wealth enough to make it unnecessary for us to ask, 'How shall we get our bread?' You may either buy an estate in some foreign country, or keep an *Osteria,* or engage in commerce, or set up some trade, or, in short, do whatever you like best, so that you do but abandon the profession of an assassin. Then we may look out for a wife among the pretty girls of our own rank in life, become the happy fathers of sons and daughters, may eat and drink in peace and security, and make amends by the honesty of our future lives for the offences of our past."

Thomaso. " Ha! ha! ha!"

Abellino. " What *you* do, that will *I* do too; I will either hang or be broken on the wheel along with you, or become an honest man, just as you please. Now, then, what is your decision?"

Thomaso. " Was there ever such a stupid counsellor?"

Pietrino. " Our decision? Nay, the point's not very difficult to decide."

Abellino. " I should have thought it *had* been."

Thomaso. " Without more words, then, I vote for our remaining as we are, and carrying on our old trade; that will bring us in plenty of gold, and enable us to lead a jolly life."

Pietrino. " Right, lad; you speak my thoughts exactly."

Thomaso. " We are bravos, it's true; but what then? We are honest fellows, and the devil take him who dares to say we are not. However, at any rate we must keep within doors for a few days, lest we should be discovered;

for I warrant you the doge's spies are abroad in search of us by this. But as soon as the pursuit is over, be it our first business to find out Matteo's murderer, and throttle him out of hand as a warning to all others."

All. "Bravo! bravissimo!"

Pietrino. "And from this day forth I vote, that Thomaso should be our captain."

Struzza. "Ay, in Matteo's stead."

All. "Right! right!"

Abellino. "To which I say amen with all my heart. Now then all is decided."

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK THE SECOND

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTHDAY.

In solitude and anxiety, with barred windows and bolted doors, did the banditti pass the day immediately succeeding Matteo's murder; every murmur in the street appeared to them a cause of apprehension; every footstep which approached their doors made them tremble till it had passed them.

In the mean while the ducal palace blazed with splendour and resounded with mirth. The doge celebrated the birthday of his fair niece, Rosabella; and the feast was honoured by the presence of the chief persons of the city, of the foreign ambassadors, and of many illustrious strangers who were at that time resident in Venice.

On this occasion no expense had been spared, no source of pleasure had been neglected. The arts contended with each other for superiority; the best poets in Venice celebrated this day with powers excelling any thing which they had before exhibited, for the subject of their verses was Rosabella; the musicians and *virtuosi* surpassed all their former triumphs, for their object was to obtain the suffrage of Rosabella. The singular union of all kinds of pleasure intoxicated the imagination of every guest; and the genius of delight extended his influence over the whole assembly, over the old man and the youth, over the matron and the virgin.

The venerable Andreas had seldom been seen in such high spirits as on this occasion. He was all life; smiles of satisfaction played round his lips; gracious and condescending to every one, he made it his chief care to pre-

vent his rank from being felt. Sometimes he trifled with the ladies, whose beauty formed the greatest ornament of this entertainment; sometimes he mingled among the masks, whose fantastic appearance and gaiety of conversation enlivened the ball-room by their variety; at other times he played chess with the generals and admirals of the republic; and frequently he forsook every thing to gaze with delight on Rosabella's dancing, or listen in silent rapture to Rosabella's music.

Lomellino, Conari, and Paolo Manfrone, the doge's three confidential friends and counsellors, in defiance of their grey hairs, mingled in the throng of youthful beauties, flirted first with one, and then with another, and the arrows of raillery were darted and received on both sides with spirit and good humour.

"Now, Lomellino," said Andreas to his friend, who entered the saloon, in which the doge was at that time accidentally alone with his niece, "you seem in gayer spirits this evening than when we were lying before Scardona, and had so hard a game to play against the Turks."

Lomellino. "I shall not take upon me to deny that, signor. I still think with a mixture of terror and satisfaction on the night when we took Scardona, and carried the half-moon before the city walls. By my soul, our Venetians fought like lions."

Andreas. "Fill this goblet to their memory, my old soldier; you have earned your rest bravely."

Lomellino. "Ay, signor, and oh, it is so sweet to rest on laurels! But, in truth, 't is to *you* that I am indebted for mine; it is you who have immortalised me. No soul on earth would have known that Lomellino existed, had he not fought in Dalmatia and Sicilia under the banners of the great Andreas, and assisted him in raising eternal trophies in honour of the republic."

Andreas. "My good Lomellino, the Cyprus wine has heated your imagination."

Lomellino. "Nay, I know well I ought not to call you great, and praise you thus openly to your face; but faith, signor, I am grown too old for it to be worth my while to flatter. That is a business which I leave to our young

courtiers, who have never yet come within the smell of powder, and never have fought for Venice and Andreas."

Andreas. "You are an old enthusiast! Think you the emperor is of the same opinion?"

Lomellino. "Unless Charles the Fifth is deceived by those about him, or is too proud to allow the greatness of an enemy, he must say, perforce, 'There is but one man on earth whom I fear, and who is worthy to contend with me, and that man is Andreas.'"

Andreas. "I suspect he will be sorely displeased when he receives my answer to the message by which he notified to me the imprisonment of the French king."

Lomellino. "Displeased he will be, signor, no doubt of it; but what then? Venice need not fear his displeasure, while Andreas still lives. But when you and your heroes are once gone to your eternal rest—then, alas! for thee, poor Venice. I fear your golden times will soon come to their conclusion."

Andreas. "What! Have we not many young officers of great promise?"

Lomellino. "Alas! what are most of them? Heroes in the fields of Venus! Heroes at a drinking bout! Effeminate striplings, relaxed both in mind and body! But how I am running on, forgetful—Ah! when one is grown old, and conversing with an Andreas, it is easy to forget every thing else. My lord, I sought you with a request; a request, too, of consequence."

Andreas. "You excite my curiosity."

Lomellino. "About a week ago, there arrived here a young Florentine nobleman called Flodoardo, a youth of noble appearance and great promise."

Andreas. "Well?"

Lomellino. "His father was one of my dearest friends; he is dead now, the good old generous nobleman! In our youth we served together on board the same vessel, and many a turbaned head has fallen beneath his sword. Ah, he was a brave soldier!"

Andreas. "While celebrating the father's bravery, you seem to have quite forgotten the son."

Lomellino. "His son is arrived in Venice, and wishes

to enter into the service of the republic. I entreat you, give the young man some respectable situation; he will prove the boast of Venice, when we shall be in our graves; on that would I hazard my existence!"

Andreas. "Has he sense and talent?"

Lomellino. "That he has, and a heart like his father's. Will it please you to see and converse with him? He is yonder, among the masks in the great saloon. One thing I must tell you, as a specimen of his designs. He has heard of the banditti who infest Venice; and he engages, that the first piece of service which he renders the republic shall be the delivering into the hands of justice these concealed assassins, who hitherto have eluded the vigilance of our police."

Andreas. "Indeed! I doubt that promise will be too much for his power to perform. Flodoardo, I think you called him? Tell him I would speak with him."

Lomellino. "Oh, then I have gained at least the *half* of my cause, and, I believe, the *whole* of it; for to see Flodoardo, and not to like him, is as difficult as to look at Paradise, and not wish to enter. To see Flodoardo, and to hate him, is as unlikely as that a blind man should hate the kind hand which removes the cataract from his eyes, and pours upon them the blessings of light, and beauties of nature."

Andreas (*smiling*). "In the whole course of our acquaintance, Lomellino, never did I hear you so enthusiastic. Go, then; conduct this prodigy hither."

Lomellino. "I hasten to find him. And as for you, signora, look to yourself! look to yourself, I say!"

Rosabella. "Nay, prithee, Lomellino, bring your hero hither without delay; you have raised my curiosity to the height."

Lomellino quitted the saloon.

Andreas. "How comes it that you rejoin not the dancers, my child?"

Rosabella. "I am weary, and, besides, curiosity now detains me here, for I would fain see this Flodoardo, whom Lomellino thinks deserving of such extraordinary praise. Shall I tell you the truth, my dear uncle? I verily believe

that I am already acquainted with him. There was a mask in a Grecian habit, whose appearance was so striking that it was impossible for him to remain confounded with the crowd: the least attentive eye must have singled him out from among a thousand. It was a tall light figure, so graceful in every movement—then his dancing was quite perfection."

Andreas (*smiling, and threatening with his finger*). "Child! child!"

Rosabella. "Nay, my dear uncle, what I say is mere justice: it is possible, indeed, that the Greek and the Florentine may be two different persons; but still, according to Lomellino's description—Oh, look, dear uncle, only look yonder! there stands the Greek, as I live."

Andreas. "And Lomellino is with him—they approach. Rosabella, you have made a good guess."

The doge had scarcely ceased to speak, when Lomellino entered the room, conducting a tall young man, richly habited in the Grecian fashion.

"My gracious lord," said Lomellino, "I present to you the Count Flodoardo, who humbly sues for your protection."

Flodoardo uncovered his head in token of respect, took off his mask, and bowed low before the illustrious ruler of Venice.

Andreas. "I understand you are desirous of serving the republic?"

Flodoardo. "That is my ambition, should your highness think me deserving of such an honour."

Andreas. "Lomellino speaks highly of you; if all that he says be true, how came you to deprive your own country of your services?"

Flodoardo. "Because my own country is not governed by an Andreas."

Andreas. "You have intentions, it seems, of discovering the haunts of the banditti, who for some time past have caused so many tears to flow in Venice?"

Flodoardo. "If your highness would deign to confide in me, I would answer with my head for their delivery into the hands of your officers, and that speedily."

Andreas. "That were much for a stranger to perform. I would fain make the trial whether you can keep your word."

Flodoardo. "That is sufficient. To-morrow, or the day after at latest, will I perform my promise."

Andreas. "And you make that promise so resolutely? Are you aware, young man, how dangerous a task it is to surprise these miscreants? They are never to be found when sought for, and always present when least expected; they are at once every where, and no where; there exists not a nook in all Venice which our spies are not acquainted with, or have left unexamined, and yet has our police endeavoured in vain to discover the place of their concealment."

Flodoardo. "I know all this, and to know it rejoices me, since it affords me an opportunity of convincing the Doge of Venice that my actions are not those of a common adventurer."

Andreas. "Perform your promise, and then let me hear of you. For the present our discourse shall end here, for no unpleasant thoughts must disturb the joy to which this day is dedicated. — Rosabella, would you not like to join the dancers? Count, I confide her to your care."

Flodoardo. "I could not be intrusted with a more precious charge."

Rosabella, during this conversation, had been leaning against the back of her uncle's chair: she repeated to herself Lomellino's assertion, "that to see Flodoardo, and not to like him, was as difficult as to look at Paradise and not wish to enter;" and while she gazed on the youth, she allowed that Lomellino had not exaggerated. When her uncle desired Flodoardo to conduct her to the dancers, a soft blush overspread her cheeks, and she doubted whether she should accept or decline the hand which was immediately offered.

And to tell you my real opinion, my fair ladies, I suspect that very few of you would have been more collected than Rosabella, had you found yourselves similarly situated. In truth, such a form as Flodoardo's; a countenance whose physiognomy seemed a passport at once to the hearts of all who examined it; features so exquisitely fashioned, that

the artist who wished to execute a model of manly beauty, had he imitated them, would have had nothing to supply or improve; features, every one of which spoke so clearly — "the bosom of this youth contains the heart of a hero." — Ah, ladies, my dear ladies, a man like this might well make some little confusion in the head and heart of a poor young girl, tender and unsuspicious!

Flodoardo took Rosabella's hand, and led her into the ball-room. Here all was mirth and splendour; the roofs re-echoed with the full swell of harmony, and the floor trembled beneath the multitude of dancers, who formed a thousand beautiful groups by the blaze of innumerable lustres. Yet Flodoardo and Rosabella passed on in silence, till they reached the extreme end of the great saloon. Here they stopped, and remained before an open window. Some minutes passed, and still they spoke not. Sometimes they gazed on each other; sometimes on the dancers, sometimes on the moon; and then again they forgot each other, the dancers, and the moon, and were totally absorbed in themselves.

"Lady," said Flodoardo at length, "can there be a greater misfortune!"

"A misfortune?" said Rosabella, starting, as if suddenly awaking from a dream; "what misfortune, signor? who is unfortunate?"

"He who is doomed to behold the joys of Elysium, and never to possess them; he who dies of thirst, and sees a cup stand full before him, but which he knows is destined for the lips of another?"

"And are you, my lord, this outcast from Elysium? Are you the thirsty one who stands near the cup which is filled for another? Is it thus that you wish me to understand your speech?"

"You understand it as I meant; and now tell me, lovely Rosabella, am I not indeed unfortunate?"

"And where, then, is the Elysium which you never must possess?"

"Where Rosabella is, there is Elysium."

Rosabella blushed, and cast her eyes on the ground.

"You are not offended, signora?" said Flodoardo, and

took her hand with an air of respectful tenderness; "has this openness displeased you?"

"You are a native of Florence, Count Flodoardo? In Venice we dislike these kind of compliments; at least *I* dislike them, and wish to hear them from no one less than from you."

"By my life, signora, I spoke but as I thought; my words concealed no flattery."

"See! the doge enters the saloon with Manfrone and Lomellino; he will seek us among the dancers. Come, let us join them."

Flodoardo followed her in silence. The dance began. Heavens! how lovely looked Rosabella as she glided along to the sweet sounds of music, conducted by Flodoardo! How handsome looked Flodoardo, as, lighter than air, he flew down the dance, while his brilliant eyes saw no object but Rosabella! He was still without his mask, and bare-headed; but every eye glanced away from the helmets and *barrettes*, waving with plumes and sparkling with jewels, to gaze on Flodoardo's raven locks, as they floated on the air in wild luxuriance. A murmur of admiration rose from every corner of the saloon, but it rose unmarked by those who were the objects of it: neither Rosabella nor Flodoardo at that moment formed a wish to be applauded, except by each other.

CHAPTER II.

THE FLORENTINE STRANGER.

Two evenings had elapsed since the doge's entertainment; on the second Parozzi sat in his own apartment with Memmo and Falieri. Dimly burnt the lights; lowering and tempestuous were the skies without; gloomy and fearful were the souls of the libertines within.

Parozzi (*after a long silence*). "What! are you both dreaming? Ho, there! Memmo, Falieri, fill your goblets."

Memmo (*with indifference*). "Well! to please you. But I care not for wine to-night."

Falieri. "Nor I. Methinks it tastes like vinegar. Yet the wine itself is good; 'tis our ill-temper spoils it."

Parozzi. "Confound the rascals!"

Memmo. "What? the banditti?"

Parozzi. "Not a trace of them can be found! It is enough to kill one with vexation!"

Falieri. "And in the mean while the time runs out, our projects will get wind, and then we shall sit quietly in the state prisons of Venice, objects of derision to the populace and ourselves! I could tear my flesh for anger!" (*An universal silence.*)

Parozzi (*striking his hand against the table passionately*). "Flodoardo! Flodoardo!"

Falieri. "In a couple of hours I must attend the Cardinal Gonzaga! and what intelligence shall I have to give him?"

Memmo. "Come, come! Contarino cannot have been absent so long without cause; I warrant you, he will bring some news with him when he arrives."

Falieri. "Psha! psha! My life on't, he lies at this moment at Olympia's feet, and forgets us, the republic, the banditti, and himself."

Parozzi. "And so neither of you know any thing of this Flodoardo?"

Memmo. "No more than what happened on Rosabella's birthday."

Falieri. "Well, then, I know *one* thing more about him; Parozzi is jealous of him."

Parozzi. "I? Ridiculous! Rosabella may bestow her hand on the German emperor, or a Venetian gondolier, without its giving *me* the least anxiety."

Falieri. "Ha! ha! ha!"

Memmo. "Well, one thing at least even envy must confess; Flodoardo is the handsomest man in Venice. I doubt whether there's a woman in the city who has virtue enough to resist him."

Parozzi. "And *I* should doubt it too, if women had as

little sense as *you* have, and looked only at the shell, without minding the kernel."

Memmo. "Which, unluckily, is exactly the thing which women always do."

Falieri. "The old Lomellino seems to be extremely intimate with this Flodoardo; they say he was well acquainted with his father."

Memmo. "It was he who presented him to the doge."

Parozzi. "Hark! Surely some one knocked at the palace-door?"

Memmo. "It can be none but Contarino. Now then we shall hear whether he has discovered the banditti."

Falieri (*starting from his chair*). "I'll swear to that footstep! it's Contarino!"

The doors were thrown open: Contarino entered hastily, enveloped in his cloak.

"Good evening, sweet gentlemen!" said he, and threw his mantle aside. And Memmo, Parozzi, and Falieri started back in horror.

"Good God!" they exclaimed, "what has happened? You are covered with blood?"

"A trifle!" cried Contarino; "is that wine? quick! Give me a goblet of it! I expire with thirst."

Falieri (*while he gives him a cup*). "But, Contarino, you bleed?"

Contarino. "You need not tell me that — I did not do it myself, I promise you."

Parozzi. "First let us bind up your wounds, and then tell us what has happened to you. It is as well that the servants should remain ignorant of your adventure; I will be your surgeon myself."

Contarino. "What has happened to me, say you? Oh, a joke, gentlemen! a mere joke! Here, Falieri, fill the bowl again."

Memmo. "I can scarcely breathe for terror!"

Contarino. "Very possibly; neither should *I*, were I Memmo, instead of being Contarino — the wound bleeds plenteously, it's true, but it's by no means dangerous." (*He tore open his doublet, and uncovered his bosom.*) "There,

look, comrades! you see it 's only a cut of not more than two inches deep."

Memmo (*shuddering*). "Mercy on me! the very sight of it makes my blood run cold."

Parozzi brought ointments and linen, and bound up the wound of his associate.

Contarino. "Old Horace is in the right: a philosopher can be any thing he pleases, a cobbler, a king, or a physician. Only observe with what dignified address the philosopher Parozzi spreads that plaster for me!—I thank you, friend; that's enough.—And now, comrades, place yourselves in a circle round me, and listen to the wonders which I am going to relate."

Falieri. "Proceed."

Contarino. "As soon as it was twilight, I stole out, wrapped in my cloak, determined, if possible, to discover some of the banditti: I knew not their persons, neither were they acquainted with mine. An extravagant undertaking, perhaps, you will tell me; but I was resolved to convince you, that every thing which a man *determines* to do may be done. I had some information respecting the rascals, though it was but slight, and on these grounds I proceeded. I happened by mere accident to stumble upon a gondolier, whose appearance excited my curiosity. I fell into discourse with him: I soon was convinced that he was not ignorant of the lurking-place of the bravos, and by means of some gold, and many fair speeches, I at length brought him to confess, that though not regularly belonging to the band, he had occasionally been employed by them. I immediately made a bargain with him: he conducted me in his gondola through the greatest part of Venice, sometimes right, sometimes left, till at length I lost every idea as to the quarter of the town in which I found myself. At length he insisted on binding my eyes with his handkerchief, and I was compelled to submit to this condition. Half an hour elapsed before the gondola stopped; he told me to descend, conducted me through a couple of streets, and at length knocked at a door, where he left me still blindfolded—the door was opened; my business was enquired with great caution, and after some demur I was

at length admitted. The handkerchief was now withdrawn from my eyes, and I found myself in a small chamber, surrounded by four men of not the most creditable appearance, and a young woman, who (it seems) had opened the door for me."

Falieri. "You are a daring fellow, Contarino!"

Contarino. "Here was no time to be lost. I instantly threw my purse on the table, promised them mountains of gold, and fixed on particular days, hours, and signals which were necessary to facilitate our future intercourse. For the present I only required that Manfrone, Conari, and Lomellino should be removed with all possible expedition."

All. "Bravo!"

Contarino. "So far every thing went exactly as we could have wished; and one of my new associates was just setting out to guide me home, when we were surprised by an unexpected visit."

Parozzi. "Well."

Memmo (*anxiously*). "Go on, for God's sake!"

Contarino. "A knocking was heard at the door; the girl went to enquire the cause; in an instant she returned pale as a corse, and—'Fly! fly!' cried she."

Falieri. "What followed?"

Contarino. "Why then followed a whole legion of sbirri, and police officers, and who should be at their head but — the Florentine stranger!"

All. "Flodoardo? what, Flodoardo?"

Contarino. "Flodoardo."

Falieri. "What demon could have guided him thither?"

Parozzi. "Hell and furies! Oh that *I* had been there!"

Memmo. "There now, Parozzi! you see at least that Flodoardo is no coward."

Falieri. "Hush, let us hear the rest."

Contarino. "We stood, as if we had been petrified; not a soul could stir a finger.—'In the name of the doge and the republic,' cried Flodoardo, 'yield yourselves and deliver your arms.'—'The devil shall yield himself sooner than we!' exclaimed one of the banditti, and forced a sword from one of the officers: the others snatched their muskets from the walls; and as for me, my first care

was to extinguish the lamp, so that we could not tell friends from foes. But still the confounded moonshine gleamed through the window shutters, and shed a partial light through the room.—'Look to yourself, Contarino!' thought I; 'if you are found here, you will be hanged for company!' and I drew my sword, and made a longe at Flodoardo. But, however well-intended, my thrust was foiled by his sabre, which he whirled around with the rapidity of lightning. I fought like a madman, but all my skill was without effect on this occasion, and before I was aware of it, Flodoardo ripped open my bosom. I felt myself wounded, and sprang back; at that moment two pistols were fired, and the flash discovered to me a small side-door, which they had neglected to beset; through this I stole unperceived into the adjoining chamber, burst open the grated window, sprang below unhurt, crossed a court-yard, climbed two or three garden-walls, gained the canal, where a gondola fortunately was waiting, persuaded the boatman to convey me with all speed to the Place of St. Mark, and thence hastened hither, astonished to find myself still alive. There is an infernal adventure for you!"

Parozzi. "I shall go mad!"

Falieri. "Every thing we design is counteracted! the more trouble we give ourselves, the further are we from the goal!"

Memmo. "I confess it seems to me as if Heaven gave us warning to desist. How say you?"

Contarino. "Psha! these are trifles! Such accidents should only serve to sharpen our wits! The more obstacles I encounter, the firmer is my resolution to surmount them."

Falieri. "Do the banditti know who you are?"

Contarino. "No; they are not only ignorant of my name, but suppose me to be a mere instrument of some powerful man, who has been injured by the ducal confederates."

Memmo. "Well, Contarino, in my mind you should thank Heaven that you have escaped so well!"

Falieri. "But since he is an absolute stranger in Venice, how could Flodoardo discover the lurking-place of the banditti?"

Contarino. "I know not—probably by mere accident, like myself. But by the Power that made me, he shall pay dearly for this wound!"

Falieri. "Flodoardo is rather too hasty in making himself remarked."

Parozzi. "Flodoardo must die!"

Contarino (*filling a goblet*). "May his next cup contain poison!"

Falieri. "I shall do myself the honour of becoming better acquainted with the gentleman."

Contarino. "Memmo, we must needs have full purses, or our business will hang on hand wofully. When does your uncle take his departure to a better world?"

Memmo. "To-morrow evening!—and yet—Ugh! I tremble."

CHAPTER III.

MORE CONFUSION.

Since Rosabella's birthday, no woman in Venice, who had the slightest pretensions to beauty, or the most remote expectations of making conquests, had any subject of conversation except the handsome Florentine: he found employment for every female tongue; and she who dared not employ her tongue, made amends for the privation with her thoughts. Many a maiden now enjoyed less tranquil slumbers; many an experienced coquette sighed, as she laid on her colour at the looking-glass; many a prude forgot the rules which she had imposed upon herself, and daily frequented the gardens and public walks, in which report gave her the hope of meeting Flodoardo.

But from the time that, placing himself at the head of the sbirri, he had dared to enter boldly the den of the banditti, and seize them at the hazard of his life, he was scarcely more an object of attention among the women

than among the men. Greatly did they admire his courage and unshaken presence of mind, while engaged in so dangerous an adventure; but still more were they astonished at his penetration in discovering where the bravos concealed themselves, an attempt which had foiled even the keen wits of the so much celebrated police of Venice.

The Doge Andreas cultivated the acquaintance of this singular young man with increasing assiduity; and the more he conversed with him, the more deserving of consideration did Flodoardo appear. The action by which he had rendered the republic a service so essential was rewarded by a present that would not have disgraced imperial gratitude; and one of the most important offices in the state was confided to his superintendence.

Both favours were conferred unsolicited; but no sooner was the Florentine apprised of the doge's benevolent care of him, than with modesty and respect he requested to decline the proposed advantages. The only favour which he requested was, to be permitted to live free and independent in Venice during a year; at the end of which he promised to name that employment which he esteemed the best adapted to his abilities and inclination.

Flodoardo was lodged in the magnificent palace of his good old patron Lomellino: here he lived in the closest retirement, studied the most valuable parts of ancient and modern literature, remained for whole days together in his own apartment, and was seldom to be seen in public, except upon some great solemnity.

But the doge, Lomellino, Manfrone, and Conari,—men, who had established the fame of Venice on so firm a basis that it would require centuries to undermine it,—men, in whose society one seemed to be withdrawn from the circle of ordinary mortals, and honoured by the intercourse of superior beings,—men, who now graciously received the Florentine stranger into their intimacy, and resolved to spare no pains in forming him to support the character of a great man,—it could not long escape the observation of men like these, that Flodoardo's gaiety was assumed, and that a secret sorrow preyed upon his heart.

In vain did Lomellino, who loved him like a father, endeavour to discover the source of his melancholy; in vain did the venerable doge exert himself to disperse the gloom which oppressed his young favourite; Flodoardo remained silent and sad.

And Rosabella? — Rosabella would have belied her sex had she remained gay while Flodoardo sorrowed. Her spirits were flown; her eyes were frequently obscured with tears. She grew daily paler and paler; till the doge, who doted on her, was seriously alarmed for her health. At length Rosabella grew really ill; a fever fixed itself upon her; she became weak, and was confined to her chamber, and her complaint baffled the skill of the most experienced physicians in Venice.

In the midst of these unpleasant circumstances, in which Andreas and his friends now found themselves, an incident occurred one morning which raised their uneasiness to the very highest pitch. Never had so bold and audacious an action been heard of in Venice as that which I am now going to relate.

The four banditti whom Flodoardo had seized, Pietrino, Struzza, Baluzzo, and Thomaso, had been safely committed to the doge's dungeons, where they underwent a daily examination, and looked upon every sun that rose as the last that would ever rise for *them*. Andreas and his confidential counsellors now flattered themselves that the public tranquillity had nothing more to apprehend, and that Venice was completely purified of the miscreants, whom gold could bribe to be the instruments of revenge and cruelty, — when all at once the following address was discovered affixed to most of the remarkable statues, and pasted against the corners of the principal streets and pillars of the public buildings: —

"VENETIANS!

"Struzza, Thomaso, Pietrino, Baluzzo, and Matteo, five as brave men as the world ever produced; who, had they stood at the head of armies, would have been called *heroes*, and now being called *banditti*, are fallen victims to

the injustice of state policy. These men, it is true, exist for you no longer; but their place is supplied by him whose name is affixed to this paper, and who will stand by his employers with body and with soul! I laugh at the vigilance of the Venetian police; I laugh at the crafty and insolent Florentine, whose hand has dragged my brethren to the rack! Let those who need me, seek me; they will find me every where! Let those who search for me with the design of delivering me up to the law, despair and tremble; they will find me nowhere. But *I* shall find *them*, and that when they least expect me! Venetians, you understand me! Woe to the man who shall attempt to discover me; his life and death depend upon my pleasure. This comes from the Venetian bravo,

"ABELLINO."

"A hundred sequins," exclaimed the incensed doge on reading the paper,—"a hundred sequins to him who discovers this monster Abellino, and a thousand to him who delivers him up to justice!"

But in vain did spies ransack every lurking-place in Venice; no Abellino was to be found. In vain did the luxurious, the avaricious, and the hungry stretch their wits to the utmost, incited by the tempting promise of a thousand sequins. Abellino's prudence set all their ingenuity at defiance.

But not the less did every one assert that he had recognised Abellino sometimes in one disguise, and sometimes in another; as an old man, a gondolier, a woman, or a monk. Every body had seen him somewhere; but unluckily nobody could tell where he was to be seen again.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VIOLET.

I INFORMED my readers, in the beginning of the last chapter, that Flodoardo was become melancholy, and that Rosabella was indisposed; but I did not tell them what had occasioned this sudden change.

Flodoardo, who on his first arrival at Venice was all gaiety, and the life of every society in which he mingled, lost his spirits on one particular day; and it so happened, that it was on the very same day that Rosabella betrayed the first symptoms of indisposition.

For on this unlucky day did the caprice of accident, or, perhaps, the goddess of love, (who has her caprices, too, every now and then,) conduct Rosabella into her uncle's garden, which none but the doge's intimate friends were permitted to enter, and where the doge himself frequently reposed in solitude and silence during the evening hours of a sultry day.

Rosabella, lost in thought, wandered listless and unconscious along the broad and shady alleys of the garden. Sometimes, in a moment of vexation, she plucked the unoffending leaves from the hedges, and strewed them upon the ground; sometimes she stopped suddenly, then rushed forward with impetuosity, then again stood still, and gazed upon the clear blue heaven. Sometimes her beautiful bosom was heaved with quick and irregular motion; and sometimes a half-suppressed sigh escaped from her lips of coral.

"He is very handsome!" she murmured, and gazed with such eagerness on vacancy, as had she seen there something which was hidden from the sight of common observers.

"Yet Camilla is in the right!" she resumed after a pause; and she frowned as had she said that Camilla was in the wrong.

This Camilla was her governess, her friend, her confidant, I may almost say her mother. Rosabella had lost her parents early: her mother died when her child could scarcely lisp her name; and her father, Guiscardo of Corfu, the commander of a Venetian vessel, eight years before, had perished in an engagement with the Turks, while he was still in the prime of life. Camilla, one of the worthiest creatures that ever dignified the name of woman, supplied to Rosabella the place of mother, had brought her up from infancy, and was now her best friend, and the person to whose ear she confided all her little secrets.

While Rosabella was still buried in her own reflections, the excellent Camilla advanced from a side-path, and hastened to join her pupil. Rosabella started.

Rosabella. "Ah! dear Camilla, is it you? What brings you hither?"

Camilla. "You often call me your guardian angel, and guardian angels should always be near the object of their care."

Rosabella. "Camilla, I have been thinking over your arguments; I cannot deny that all you have said to me is very true, and very wise; but still——"

Camilla. "But still, though your prudence agrees with me, your heart is of a contrary opinion?"

Rosabella. "It is, indeed."

Camilla. "Nor do I blame your heart for differing from me, my poor girl! I have acknowledged to you, without disguise, that were *I* at your time of life, and were such a man as Flodoardo to throw himself in my way, I could not receive his attentions with indifference. It cannot be denied, that this young stranger is an uncommonly pleasing, and, indeed, for any woman whose heart is disengaged, an uncommonly *dangerous*, companion. There is something very prepossessing in his appearance; his manners are elegant; and, short as has been his abode in Venice, it is already past doubting that there are many noble and striking features in his character. But, alas! after all, he is but a poor nobleman; and it is not very probable that the rich and powerful Doge of Venice will

ever bestow his niece on one who, to speak plainly, arrived here little better than a beggar. No, no, child; believe me, a romantic adventurer is no fit husband for Rosabella of Corfu."

Rosabella. "Dear Camilla, who was talking about husbands? What I feel for Flodoardo is merely affection, friendship."

Camilla. "Indeed! Then you would be perfectly satisfied, should some one of our wealthy ladies bestow her hand on Flodoardo?"

Rosabella (*hastily*). "Oh, Flodoardo would not *accept* her hand, Camilla; of that I am sure."

Camilla. "Child! child! you would willingly deceive yourself. But be assured that a girl who loves ever connects (perhaps unconsciously) the wish for an eternal *union* with the idea of an eternal *affection*. Now this is a wish which you cannot indulge in regard to Flodoardo, without seriously offending your uncle, who, good man as he is, must still submit to the severe control of politics and etiquette."

Rosabella. "I know all that, Camilla; but can I not make you comprehend that I am not in love with Flodoardo, and do not mean to be in love with him, and that love has nothing at all to do in the business? I repeat to you, what I feel for him is nothing but sincere and fervent friendship; and surely Flodoardo deserves that I should feel that sentiment for him: — deserves it, said I? Oh, what does Flodoardo *not* deserve!"

Camilla. "Ay, ay! friendship, indeed; and love. Oh, Rosabella! you know not how often these deceivers borrow each other's mask, to ensnare the hearts of unsuspecting maidens. You know not how often love finds admission, when wrapped in friendship's cloak, into that bosom which, had he approached under his own appearance, would have been closed against him for ever. In short, my child, reflect how much you owe to your uncle; reflect how much uneasiness this inclination would cost him; and sacrifice to duty what, at present, is a mere caprice, but which, if encouraged, might make too deep an

impression on your heart to be afterwards removed by your best efforts."

Rosabella. "You say right, Camilla. I really believe myself that my prepossession in Flodoardo's favour is merely an accidental fancy, of which I shall easily get the better. No, no. I am not in love with Flodoardo, of that you may rest assured; I even think that I rather feel an antipathy towards him, since you have shown me the possibility of his making me prove a cause of uneasiness to my kind, my excellent uncle."

Camilla (*smiling*). "Are your sentiments of duty and gratitude so *very* strong?"

Rosabella. "Oh, that they are, Camilla; and so you will say yourself hereafter. This disagreeable Flodoardo — to give me so much vexation. I wish he had never come to Venice. I declare I do not like him at all!"

Camilla. "No? what? not like Flodoardo?"

Rosabella (*casting down her eyes*). "No, not at all. Not that I wish him ill either; for, you know, Camilla, there's no reason why I should *hate* this poor Flodoardo?"

Camilla. "Well, we will resume this subject when I return. I have business, and the gondola waits for me. Farewell, my child; and do not lay aside your resolution as hastily as you took it up."

Camilla departed, and Rosabella remained melancholy and uncertain. She built castles in the air, and destroyed them as soon as built; she formed wishes, and condemned herself for having formed them; she looked round her frequently in search of something, but dared not confess to herself what it was of which she was in search.

The evening was sultry, and Rosabella was compelled to shelter herself from the sun's overpowering heat. In the garden was a small fountain, bordered by a bank of moss, over which the magic hands of art and nature had formed a canopy of ivy and jessamine. Thither she bent her steps; she arrived at the fountain, — and instantly drew back, covered with blushes; for on the bank of moss, shaded by the protecting canopy, whose waving

blossoms were reflected on the fountain, Flodoardo was seated, and fixed his eyes on a roll of parchment.

Rosabella hesitated whether she should retire or stay. Flodoardo started from his place, apparently in no less confusion than herself, and relieved her from her indecision by taking her hand with respect, and conducting her to the seat which he had just quitted.

Now, then, she could not possibly retire immediately, unless she meant to violate every common principle of good breeding.

Her hand was still clasped in Flodoardo's; but it was so natural for him to take it, that she could not blame him for having done so. But what was she next to do? Draw her hand away? Why should she, since he did her hand no harm by keeping it, and the keeping it seemed to make him so happy? And how could the gentle Rosabella resolve to commit an act of such unheard-of cruelty, as wilfully to deprive any one of a pleasure which made *him* so happy, and which did *herself* no harm?

"Signora," said Flodoardo, merely for the sake of saying something, "you do well to enjoy the open air: the evening is beautiful."

"But I interrupt your studies, my lord?" said Rosabella.

"By no means," answered Flodoardo; and there this interesting conversation came to a full stop. Both looked down; both examined the heaven and the earth, the trees and the flowers, in the hopes of finding some hints for renewing the conversation; but the more anxiously they sought them, the more difficult did it seem to find what they sought; and in this painful embarrassment did two whole precious minutes elapse.

"Ah, what a beautiful flower!" suddenly cried Rosabella, in order to break the silence; then stooped and plucked a violet, with an appearance of the greatest eagerness; though, in fact, nothing at that moment could have been more a matter of indifference.

"It is a very beautiful flower, indeed!" gravely observed Flodoardo, and was out of all patience with himself for having made so flat a speech.

"Nothing can surpass this purple," continued Rosabella; "red and blue so happily blended, that no painter could produce so perfect an union."

"Red and blue? the one, the symbol of happiness, the other of affection. Ah, Rosabella! how enviable will be that man's lot on whom your hand should bestow such a flower! Happiness and affection are more inseparably united than the red and blue which purple that violet!"

"You seem to attach a value to the flower of which it is but little deserving."

"Might I but know on whom Rosabella will one day bestow what that flower expresses? Yet this is a subject which I have no right to discuss: I know not what has happened to me to-day; I make nothing but blunders and mistakes. Forgive my presumption, lady, I will hazard such forward enquiries no more."

He was silent: Rosabella was silent also. All was calm and hushed, except in the hearts of the lovers.

But though they could forbid their lips to betray their hidden affection; though Rosabella's tongue said not, "Thou art he, Flodoardo, on whom this flower should be bestowed;" though Flodoardo's words had not expressed, "Rosabella, give me that violet, and that which it implies;" — oh, their eyes were far from being silent. Those treacherous interpreters of secret feelings acknowledged more to each other than their hearts had yet acknowledged to themselves.

Flodoardo and Rosabella gazed on each other with looks which made all speech unnecessary. Sweet, tender, and enthusiastic was the smile which played round Rosabella's lips, when her eyes met those of the youth whom she had selected from the rest of mankind; and with mingled emotions of hope and fear did the youth study the *meaning* of that smile. He understood it, and his heart beat louder, and his eyes flamed brighter.

Rosabella trembled; her eyes could no longer sustain the fire of his glances, and a modest blush overspread her face and bosom.

"Rosabella!" at length murmured Flodoardo uncon-

sciously; and "Flodoardo!" sighed Rosabella in the same tone.

"Give *me* that violet!" he exclaimed, eagerly; then sank at her feet, and in a tone of the most humble supplication repeated, "Oh, give it to *me!*"

Rosabella held the flower fast.

"Ask for it what thou wilt: if a throne can purchase it, I will pay that price, or perish! Rosabella, give me that flower."

She stole one look at the handsome suppliant, and dared not hazard a second.

"My repose, my happiness, my life, nay, even my glory, all depend on the possession of that little flower! Let *that* be mine, and here I solemnly renounce all else which the world calls precious!"

The flower trembled in her snowy hand; her fingers clasped it less firmly.

"You hear me, Rosabella? I kneel at your feet, and am I then in vain a beggar?"

The word *beggar* recalled to her memory Camilla and her prudent counsels. "What am I doing?" she said to herself; "have I forgotten my promise — my resolution? Fly, Rosabella, fly, or this hour makes you faithless to yourself and duty!"

She tore the flower to pieces, and threw it contemptuously on the ground.

"I understand you, Flodoardo," said she, "and having understood you, will never suffer this subject to be renewed. Here let us part, and let me not again be offended by a similar presumption. — Farewell!"

She turned from him with disdain, and left Flodoardo rooted to his place with sorrow and astonishment.

CHAPTER V.

THE ASSASSIN.

SCARCELY had she reached her chamber ere Rosabella repented her having acted so courageously. It was cruel in her, she thought, to have given him so harsh an answer! She recollected with what hopeless and melancholy looks the poor thunderstruck youth had followed her steps as she turned to leave him. She fancied that she saw him stretched despairing on the earth, his hair dishevelled, his eyes filled with tears. She heard him term her the murderess of his repose, pray for death, as his only refuge, and she saw him with every moment approach towards the attainment of his prayer, through the tears which he shed on *her* account. Already she heard those dreadful words, "Flodoardo is no more!" Already she saw the sympathising multitude weep round the tomb of him whom all the virtuous loved, and whom the wicked dreaded; whom all his friends adored, and whom even his enemies admired.

"Alas! alas!" cried she, "this was but a wretched attempt to play the heroine; already does my resolution fail me. Ah, Flodoardo, I meant not what I said! I love you, love you now, and must love you always, though Camilla may chide, and though my good uncle may hate me."

In a few days after this interview, she understood that an extraordinary alteration had taken place in Flodoardo's manner and appearance; that he had withdrawn himself from all general society; and that when the solicitations of his intimate friends compelled him to appear in their circle, his spirits seemed evidently depressed by the weight of an unconquerable melancholy.

This intelligence was like the stroke of a poniard to the feeling heart of Rosabella. She fled for shelter to the solitude of her chamber, there indulged her feelings with-

out restraint, and lamented, with showers of repentant tears, her harsh treatment of Flodoardo.

The grief which preyed in secret on her soul soon undermined her health. No one could relieve her sufferings, for no one knew the cause of her melancholy, or the origin of her illness. No wonder, then, that Rosabella's situation at length excited the most bitter anxiety in the bosom of her venerable uncle. No wonder, too, that Flodoardo entirely withdrew himself from a world, which was become odious to him since Rosabella was to be seen in it no longer; and that he devoted himself in solitude to the indulgence of a passion which he had vainly endeavoured to subdue; and which, in the impetuosity of its course, had already swallowed up every other wish, and every other sentiment.

But let us for a moment turn from the sick chamber of Rosabella, and visit the dwellings of the conspirators, who were now advancing with rapid strides towards the execution of their plans; and who, with every hour that passed over their heads, became more numerous, more powerful, and more dangerous to Andreas and his beloved republic.

Parozzi, Memmo, Contarino, and Falieri (the chiefs of this desperate undertaking), now assembled frequently in the Cardinal Gonzaga's palace, where the different plans for altering the constitution of Venice were brought forward and discussed. But in all these different schemes it was evident that the proposer was solely actuated by considerations of private interest. The object of one was to get free from the burden of enormous debts; another was willing to sacrifice every thing to gratify his inordinate ambition; the cupidity of *this* man was excited by the treasures of Andreas and his friends; while *that* was actuated by resentment of some fancied offence, a resentment which could only be quenched with the offender's blood.

These execrable wretches, who aimed at nothing less than the total overthrow of Venice, or at least of her government, looked towards the completion of their extravagant hopes with the greater confidence, since a new but neces-

sary addition to the already existing taxes had put the Venetian populace out of humour with their rulers.

Rich enough, both in adherents and in wealth, to realise their fearful projects; rich enough in bold, shrewd, desperate men, whose minds were well adapted to the contrivance and execution of revolutionary projects; they now looked down with contempt on the good old doge, who, as yet, entertained no suspicion of the object of their nocturnal meetings.

Still did they not dare to carry their projects into effect till some principal persons in the state should be prevented by *death* from throwing obstacles in their way. For the accomplishment of this part of their plan they relied on the daggers of the banditti. Dreadful, therefore, was the sound in their ears when the bell gave the signal for execution, and they saw their best founded hopes expire on the scaffold which supported the headless trunks of the four bravos. But if their consternation was great at thus losing the destined instruments of their designs, how extravagant was their joy when the proud Abellino dared openly to declare to Venice that he still inhabited the republic, and that he still wore a dagger at the disposal of vice.

"This desperado is the very man for us!" they exclaimed unanimously, and in rapture; and now their most ardent wish was to enrol Abellino in their service.

That object was soon attained: they sought the daring ruffian, and he suffered himself to be found. He visited their meetings, but in his promises and demands he was equally extravagant.

The first and most earnest wish of the whole conspiracy was the death of Conari, the procurator; a man whom the doge valued beyond all others; a man, whose eagle-eyes made the conspirators hourly tremble for their secret, and whose services the doge had accepted, in preference to those of the Cardinal Gonzaga. But the sum which Abellino demanded for the murder of this one man was enormous.

"Give me the reward which I require," said he, "and I promise, on the word of a man of honour, that after

this night the procurator Conari shall give you no further trouble. Exalt him to heaven, or imprison him in hell, I'll engage to find and stab him."

What could they do? Abellino was not a man to be easily beaten down in his demands. The cardinal was impatient to attain the summit of his wishes; but his road lay straight over Conari's grave!

Abellino received the sum demanded: the next day the venerable Conari, the doge's best and dearest friend, the pride and safeguard of the republic, was no longer numbered among the living.

"'Tis a terrible fellow, this Abellino!" cried the conspirators when the news reached them, and celebrated the procurator's death in triumph at the cardinal's midnight feast.

The doge was almost distracted with terror and astonishment. He engaged to give ten thousand sequins to any one who should discover by whom Conari had been removed from the world. A proclamation to this effect was published at the corner of every street in Venice, and made known throughout the territories of the republic. A few days after this proclamation had been made, a paper was discovered affixed to the principal door of the Venetian Signoria.

"VENETIANS!

"You would fain know the author of Conari's death: to spare you much fruitless trouble, I hereby acknowledge, that I, Abellino, was his assassin. Twice did I bury my dagger in his heart, and then sent his body to feed fishes. The doge promises *ten* thousand sequins to him who shall *discover* Conari's murderer; and to him who shall be clever enough to *seize* him, Abellino hereby promises *twenty*.—Adieu, signors.

"I remain your faithful servant,

"ABELLINO."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TWO GREATEST MEN IN VENICE.

It must be superfluous to inform my readers that all Venice became furious at this new insolence. Within the memory of man had no one ever treated with such derision the celebrated Venetian police, or set the doge's power at defiance with such proud temerity. This occurrence threw the whole city into confusion; every one was on the look out; the patroles were doubled; the sbirri extended their researches on all sides; yet no one could see, or hear, or discover the most distant trace of Abellino.

The priests in their sermons strove to rouse the slumbering vengeance of Heaven to crush this insolent offender. The ladies were ready to swoon at the very name of Abellino; for who could assure them that, at some unexpected moment, he might not pay *them* the same compliment which he had paid to Rosabella? As for the old women, they unanimously asserted, that Abellino had sold himself to the Prince of Darkness, by whose assistance he was enabled to sport with the patience of all pious Venetians, and deride the impotence of their just indignation. The cardinal and his associates were proud of their terrible confederate, and looked forward with confidence to the triumphant issue of their undertaking. The deserted family of Conari called down curses on his murderer's head, and wished that their tears might be changed into a sea of sulphur, in whose waves they might plunge the monster Abellino: nor did Conari's relations feel more grief for his loss than the doge and his two confidants, who swore never to rest till they had discovered the lurking-place of the ruthless assassin, and had punished his crime with tenfold vengeance.

"Yet, after all," said Andreas one evening, as he sat alone in his private chamber,—"after all, it must be confessed that this Abellino is a singular man. He who can do

what Abellino has done must possess both such talents and such courage as (stood he at the head of an army) would enable him to conquer half the world! Would that I could once get a sight of him!"

"Look up then!" roared Abellino, and clapped the doge on the shoulder. Andreas started from his seat. A colossal figure stood before him, wrapt in a dark mantle, above which appeared a countenance so hideous and forbidding, that the universe could not have produced its equal.

"Who art thou?" stammered out the doge.

"Thou seest me, and canst doubt? Well, then, I am *Abellino*, the good friend of your murdered Conari, and the republic's most submissive slave."

The brave Andreas, who had never trembled in fight by land or by sea, and for whom no danger had possessed terror sufficient to shake his undaunted resolution,—the brave Andreas now forgot for a few moments his usual presence of mind. Speechless did he gaze on the daring assassin, who stood before him calm and haughty, unappalled by the majesty of the greatest man in Venice.

Abellino nodded to him with an air of familiar protection, and graciously condescended to grin upon him with a kind of half-friendly smile.

"Abellino," said the doge at length, endeavouring to recollect himself, "thou art a fearful — a detestable man!"

"Fearful?" answered the Bravo; "dost *thou* think me so? Good! that glads me to my very heart! Detestable? that may be so, or it may not. I confess the sign which I hang out gives no great promise of good entertainment within; but yet, Andreas, one thing is certain, —you and I stand on the same line, for at this moment we are the two greatest men in Venice; *you* in your way, *I* in mine."

The doge could not help smiling at the Bravo's familiar tone.

"Nay, nay," continued Abellino; "no smiles of disbelief, if you please. Allow me, though a bravo, to compare myself to a doge: truly I think there 's no great presumption in placing myself on a level with a man

whom I hold in my power, and who therefore is, in fact, beneath me."

The doge made a movement, as would he have left him.

"Not so fast," said Abellino, laughing rudely, and he barred the doge's passage. "Accident seldom unites in so small a space as this chamber a pair of such great men. Stay where you are, for I have not done with you yet: we must have a little conversation."

"Hear me, Abellino!" said the doge, mustering up all the dignity which he possessed; "thou hast received great talents from nature: why dost thou employ them to so little advantage? I here promise you, on my most sacred word, pardon for the past, and protection for the future, will you but name to me the villain who bribed you to assassinate Conari, abjure your bloody trade, and accept an honest employment in the service of the republic. If this offer is rejected, at least quit with all speed the territory of Venice, or I swear ——"

"Ho! ho!" interrupted Abellino; "*pardon* and *protection*, say you? It is long since I thought it worth my while to care for such trifles. Abellino is able to protect himself without foreign aid; and as to pardon, mortals cannot give absolution for sins like mine. On that day when all men must give in the list of their offences, then too will *I* give in *mine*, but till then *never*. You would know the name of him who bribed me to be Conari's murderer? Well, well; you shall know it — but not today. I must quit with all speed the Venetian territory? And wherefore? Through fear of thee? Ho! ho! Through fear of Venice? Ha! Abellino fears not Venice; 't is Venice that fears Abellino! You would have me abjure my profession? Well, Andreas, there is one condition which, perhaps ——"

"Name it!" cried the doge, eagerly; "will ten thousand sequins purchase your departure from the republic?"

"I would gladly give you twice as much myself, could you recall the insult of offering Abellino so miserable a bribe! No, Andreas, but one price can pay me: give me your niece for my bride; I love Rosabella, the daughter of Guiscard of Corfu."

"Monster! what insolence!"

"Ho! ho! Patience, patience, good uncle that is to be! Will you accept my terms?"

"Name what sum can satisfy you, and it shall be yours this instant, so you will only relieve Venice from your presence. Though it should cost the republic a million, she will be a gainer, if her air is no longer poisoned by your breath."

"Indeed? Why, in fact, a million is not so great a sum; for, look ye, Andreas, I have just sold for near *half* a million the lives of your two dear friends, Manfrone and Lomellino. Now give me Rosabella, and I break the bargain."

"Miscreant! Has Heaven no lightnings——"

"You will not? Mark me! In four-and-twenty hours shall Manfrone and Lomellino be food for fishes. Abellino has said it! Away!"

And with these words he drew a pistol from under his cloak, and flashed it in the doge's face. Blinded by the powder, and confused by the unexpected explosion, Andreas started back, and sank bewildered on a neighbouring sofa. He soon recovered from his astonishment: he sprang from his seat to summon his guards, and seize Abellino; but Abellino had already disappeared.

On that same evening were Parozzi and his confederates assembled in the palace of the Cardinal Gonzaga. The table was spread with the most luxurious profusion, and they arranged over their flowing goblets plans for the republic's ruin. The cardinal related how he had of late contrived to insinuate himself into the doge's good graces, and had succeeded in impressing him with an opinion that the chiefs of the confederacy were fit men to hold offices of important trust. Contarino boasted that he doubted not before long to be appointed to the vacant procuratorship. Parozzi reckoned, for *his* share, upon Rosabella's hand, and the place either of Lomellino or Manfrone, when once those two chief obstacles to his hopes should be removed. Such was the conversation in which they were engaged, when the clock struck twelve, the doors flew wide, and Abellino stood before them!

"Wine there!" cried he: "the work is done. Manfrone and Lomellino are at supper with the worms."

All sprang from their seats in rapture and astonishment.

"And I have thrown the doge himself into such a fit of terror, that I warrant you he will not recover himself easily. Now answer, are you content with me, you bloodhounds?"

"Next then for Flodoardo!" shouted Parozzi.

"Flodoardo?" muttered Abellino between his teeth; "hum! hum! that's not so easy."

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOVERS.

Rosabella, the idol of all Venice, lay on the bed of sickness; a sorrow, whose cause was carefully concealed from every one, undermined her health, and destroyed the bloom of her beauty. She loved the noble Flodoardo; and who could have known Flodoardo, and *not* have loved him? His majestic stature, his expressive countenance, his enthusiastic glance, his whole being declared aloud, "Flodoardo is nature's favourite!" and Rosabella had been always a great admirer of nature.

But if Rosabella was ill, Flodoardo was scarcely better. He confined himself to his own apartments; he shunned society, and frequently made long journeys to different cities of the republic, in hopes of distracting his thoughts by change of place from that object, which, wherever he went, still pursued him. He had now been absent for three whole weeks. No one knew in what quarter he was wandering; and it was during this absence that the so long expected prince of Monaldeschi arrived at Venice to claim Rosabella as his bride.

His appearance, to which a month before Andreas looked forward with such pleasing expectation, now afforded but little satisfaction to the doge. Rosabella was too ill to receive her suitor's visits, and he did not allow her much time to recover her health; for six days after his arrival at Venice the prince was found murdered in a retired part of one of the public gardens. His sword lay by him, unsheathed and bloody; his tablets were gone, but one leaf had been torn from them and fastened on his breast. It

was examined, and found to contain the following lines apparently written in blood: —

"Let no one pretend to Rosabella's hand who is not prepared to share the fate of Monaldeschi! — The Bravo,
"ABELLINO."

"Oh, where shall I now fly for comfort, for protection?" exclaimed the doge in despair when this dreadful news was announced. "Why, why is Flodoardo absent?"

Anxiously did he now desire the youth's return, to support him under the weight of these heavy misfortunes; nor was it long before that desire was gratified. Flodoardo returned.

"Welcome, noble youth!" said the doge, when he saw the Florentine enter his apartment; "you must not in future deprive me of your presence for so long. I am now a poor, forsaken old man: you have heard that Lomellino — that Manfrone——"

"I know all!" answered Flodoardo with a melancholy air.

"Satan has burst his chains, and now inhabits Venice under the name of Abellino, robbing me of all that my soul holds precious. Flodoardo, for heaven's love be cautious; often, during your absence, have I trembled lest the miscreant's dagger should have deprived me too of *you*. I have much to say to you, my young friend, but I must defer it till the evening; a foreigner of consequence has appointed this hour for an audience, and I must hasten to receive him. But in the evening——"

He was interrupted by the appearance of Rosabella, who, with tottering steps and pale cheeks, advanced slowly into the apartment. She saw Flodoardo, and a faint blush overspread her countenance. Flodoardo rose from his seat, and welcomed her with an air of distant respect.

"Do not go yet," said the doge; "perhaps in half an hour I may be at liberty — in the mean while I leave you to entertain my poor Rosabella; she has been very ill during your absence, and I am still uneasy about her health. She kept her bed till yesterday, and truly I think she has still left it too soon."

The venerable doge quitted the apartment, and the lovers once more found themselves alone. Rosabella drew near the window: Flodoardo at length ventured to approach it also.

"Signora," said he, "are you still angry with me?"

"I am not angry with you," stammered out Rosabella, and blushed as she recollected the garden scene.

"And you have quite forgiven my transgression?"

"Your transgression?" repeated Rosabella with a faint smile: "yes; if it *was* a transgression, I have *quite* forgiven it. Dying people ought to pardon those who have trespassed against them, in order that they, in their turn, may be pardoned their trespasses against Heaven — and *I* am dying; I feel it!"

"Signora!"

"Nay, 't is past a doubt. It 's true I have quitted my sick bed since yesterday: but I know well that I am soon to return to it, never to leave it more; and therefore — therefore I now ask your pardon, signor, for the vexation which I was obliged to cause to you the last time we met."

Flodoardo replied not.

"Will you not forgive me? You must be very difficult to appease — very revengeful!"

Flodoardo fixed his eyes on her countenance with a melancholy smile. — Rosabella extended her hand towards him.

"Will you refuse my offered hand? Shall all be forgotten?"

"Forgotten, lady? never! never! — every word and look of yours is stamped on my memory, never to be effaced. I cannot forget a transaction in which *you* bore a part; I cannot forget the scene that passed between us, every circumstance is too precious and sacred: as to *pardon* ——" He took her extended hand, and pressed it respectfully to his lips.— "I would to Heaven, dear lady, that you had in truth injured me much, that I might have much to forgive you: alas! I have at present nothing to pardon."

Both were now silent; at length Rosabella resumed the

conversation by saying, "You have made a long absence from Venice: did you travel far?"

"I did."

"And received much pleasure from your journey?"

"Much; for every where I heard the praises of Rosabella."

"Count Flodoardo!" she interrupted him with a look of reprehension, but in a gentle voice, "would you again offend me?"

"That will soon be out of my power — perhaps you can guess what are my present intentions."

"To resume your travels soon?"

"Exactly so; and the next time that I quit Venice, to return to it no more."

"No more?" she repeated eagerly. "Oh, not so, Flodoardo! Ah, can you leave me?" She stopped, ashamed of her imprudence. "Can you leave my uncle, I meant to say? You do but jest, I doubt not."

"By my honour, lady, I never was more in *earnest*."

"And whither then do you mean to go?"

"To Malta, and assist the knights in their attacks upon the Corsairs of Barbary. Providence, perhaps, may enable me to obtain the command of a galley; then will I call my vessel 'Rosabella;' then shall the war-cry be still 'Rosabella;' that name will render me invincible!"

"Oh, this is mockery, count; I have not deserved that you should sport with my feelings so cruelly."

"It is to *spare* your feelings, signora, that I am now resolved to fly from Venice; my presence might cause you some uneasy moments. I am not the happy man whose sight is destined to give you pleasure; I will at least avoid giving you pain."

"And you really can resolve to abandon the doge, whose esteem for you is so sincere, whose friendship has always been so warm?"

"I value his friendship highly: but it is not sufficient to make me happy; and could he lay kingdoms at my feet, still would his friendship be insufficient to make me happy."

"Does then your happiness require so much?"

"It does; much more than I have mentioned, infinitely more! But one boon can make me happy. I have begged for it on my knees." He caught her hand, and pressed it eagerly to his lips. "I have begged for it, Rosabella, and my suit has been rejected!"

"You are a strange enthusiast!" she said with difficulty, and scarcely knew what she said; while Flodoardo drew her gently nearer to him, and murmured in a supplicating voice, "Rosabella!"

"What would you of me?"

"My happiness!"

She gazed upon him for a moment undecided, then hastily drew away her hand, and exclaimed, "Leave me this moment, I command you! Leave me, for Heaven's sake!"

Flodoardo clasped his hands together in despair and anguish; he bowed his head in token of obedience; he left her with slow steps and a melancholy air, and as he passed the threshold, turned to bid her farewell for ever. Suddenly she rushed towards him, caught his hand, and pressed it to her heart.

"Flodoardo!" she cried, "I am thine!" and sank motionless at his feet.

CHAPTER II.

A DANGEROUS PROMISE.

And now who was so blest as the fortunate Flodoardo? The victory was his own: he had heard the wished for sentence pronounced by the lips of Rosabella. He raised her from the ground, and placed her on a sofa. Her blue eyes soon unclosed themselves once more, and the first object which they beheld was Flodoardo kneeling at her feet, while with one arm he encircled her waist. Her head sank upon the shoulder of the man for whom she had wept so many tears, for whom she had breathed so

many sighs, who had occupied so many of her thoughts by day, who had been present in so many of her dreams by night.

As they gazed in silent rapture on each other, they forgot that they were mortals: they seemed to be transported to a happier, better world. Rosabella thought that the chamber in which she sat was transformed into an earthly paradise: invisible seraphs seemed to hallow by their protecting presence the indulgence of her innocent affection; and she poured forth her secret thanks to Him who had given her a heart susceptible of love.

Through the whole course of man's existence such a moment as this occurs but once. Happy is he who sighs for its arrival; happy is he who, when it arrives, has a soul worthy of its enjoyment; happy is even he for whom that moment has long been past, so it past not unenjoyed, for the recollection of it still is precious. Sage philosophers, in vain do you assure us that the raptures of a moment like this are mere illusions of a heated imagination, scarcely more solid than an enchanting dream, which fades before the sunbeams of truth and reason. Alas! does there exist a happiness under the moon which owes not its charms in some degree to the magic of imagination?

"You are dear to me, Flodoardo!" murmured Rosabella, for Camilla and her counsels were quite forgotten; "oh, you are very, very dear!"

The youth only thanked her by clasping her still closer to his bosom, while, for the first time, he sealed her coral lips with his own. At that moment the door was suddenly thrown open; the Doge Andreas re-entered the apartment; the expected stranger had been suddenly taken ill, and Andreas was no sooner at liberty than he hastened to rejoin his favourite. The rustling of his garments roused the lovers from their dream of bliss. Rosabella started from Flodoardo's embrace with a cry of terror; Flodoardo quitted his kneeling posture, yet seemed by no means disconcerted at the discovery.

Andreas gazed upon them for some minutes, with a look which expressed at once anger, melancholy, and the most

heartfelt disappointment. He sighed deeply, cast his eyes towards heaven, and in silence turned to leave the apartment.

"Stay yet one moment, noble Andreas!" cried the Florentine.

The doge turned, and Flodoardo threw himself at his feet. Andreas looked down with calm and serious dignity on the kneeling offender, by whom his friendship had been so unworthily rewarded, and by whom his confidence had been so cruelly betrayed.

"Young man," said he in a stern voice, "the attempt to excuse yourself must be fruitless."

"Excuse myself?" interrupted Flodoardo boldly; "no, my lord, I need no excuses for loving Rosabella: 't were for him to excuse himself who had seen Rosabella and *not* loved her; yet if it is indeed a crime in me that I adore Rosabella, 't is a crime of which Heaven itself will absolve me, since it formed Rosabella so worthy to be adored!"

"You seem to lay too much stress on this fantastic apology," answered the doge contemptuously; "at least, you cannot expect that it should have much weight with me."

"I say it once more, my lord," resumed Flodoardo, while he rose from the ground, "that I intend to make *no* apology. I mean not to excuse my love for Rosabella, but to request your approbation of that love. Andreas, I adore your niece; I demand her for my bride."

The doge started in astonishment at this bold and unexpected request.

"It is true," continued the Florentine, "I am no more than a needy, unknown youth, and it seems a piece of strange temerity when such a man proposes himself to espouse the heiress of the Venetian doge. But, by Heaven, I am confident that the great Andreas means not to bestow his Rosabella on one of those whose claims to favour are overflowing coffers, extensive territories, and sounding titles, or who vainly decorate their insignificance with the glory obtained by their ancestors; glory of which they are themselves incapable of acquiring a single ray. I acknowledge freely that I have as yet performed no actions

which make me deserving such a reward as Rosabella; but it shall not be long ere I *will* perform such actions, or perish in the attempt."

The doge turned from him with a look of displeasure.

"Oh, be not incensed with him, dear uncle!" said Rosabella: she hastened to detain the doge, threw her white arms round his neck fondly, and concealed in his bosom the tears with which her countenance was bedewed.

"Make your demands!" continued Flodoardo, still addressing himself to the doge: "say what you wish me to do, and what you would have me become, in order to obtain from you the hand of Rosabella. Ask what you will, I will look on the task, however difficult, as nothing more than sport and pastime. By Heaven, I would that Venice were at this moment exposed to the most imminent danger, and that ten thousand daggers were unsheathed against your life; Rosabella my reward, how certain should I be to rescue Venice, and strike the ten thousand daggers down."

"I have served the republic faithfully and fervently for many a long year," answered Andreas with a bitter smile; "I have risked my life without hesitation; I have shed my blood with profusion; I asked nothing for my reward but to pass my old age in soft tranquillity, and of this reward have I been cheated. My bosom friends, the companions of my youth, the confidants of my age, have been torn from me by the daggers of banditti; and you, Flodoardo, you on whom I heaped all favours, have now deprived me of this, my only last remaining comfort. Answer me, Rosabella, hast thou in truth bestowed thy heart on Flodoardo *irrevocably?*"

One hand of Rosabella's still rested on her uncle's shoulder; with the other she clasped Flodoardo's, and pressed it fondly against her heart. Yet Flodoardo seemed still unsatisfied. No sooner had the doge's question struck his ear, than his countenance became dejected; and though his hand returned the pressure of Rosabella's, he shook his head mournfully, with an air of doubt, and cast on her a penetrating look, as he would have read the secrets of her inmost soul.

Andreas withdrew himself gently from Rosabella's arm, and for some time paced the apartment slowly, with a countenance sad and earnest. Rosabella sank upon a sofa which stood near her, and wept. Flodoardo eyed the doge, and waited for his decision with impatience.

Thus passed some minutes. An awful silence reigned through the chamber: Andreas seemed to be labouring with some resolution of dreadful importance. The lovers wished, yet dreaded, the conclusion of the scene, and with every moment their anxiety became more painful.

"Flodoarda," at length said the doge, and suddenly stood still in the middle of the chamber. Flodoardo advanced with a respectful air. "Young man," he continued, "I am at length resolved; Rosabella loves you, nor will I oppose the decision of her heart: but Rosabella is much too precious to admit of my bestowing her on the first who thinks fit to demand her; the man to whom I give her must be worthy such a gift: she must be the reward of his services, nor can he do services so great that such a reward will not overpay them. Your claims on the republic's gratitude are as yet but trifling; an opportunity now offers of rendering us an essential service. The murderer of Conari, Manfrone, and Lomellino — go, bring him hither! Alive or dead, thou must bring to this palace the terrible banditti king, *Abellino*."

At this unexpected conclusion of a speech, on which his happiness or despair depended, Flodoardo started back; the colour fled from his cheeks.

"My noble lord," he said at length hesitating; "you know well that ——"

"I know well," interrupted Andreas, "how difficult a task I enjoin, when I require the delivery of Abellino. For myself I swear, that I had rather a thousand times force my passage with a single vessel through the whole Turkish fleet, and carry off the admiral's ship from the midst of them, than attempt to seize this Abellino, who seems to have entered into a compact with Lucifer himself; who is to be found every where and no where; whom so many have seen, but whom no one knows; whose cautious subtilty has brought to shame the vigilance of

our state inquisitors, of the College of Ten, and of all their legions of spies and sbirri; whose very name strikes terror into the hearts of the bravest Venetians, and from whose dagger I myself am not safe upon my throne! I know well, Flodoardo, how much I ask; but I know also how much I proffer. You seem irresolute? You are silent? Flodoardo, I have long watched you with attention; I have discovered in you marks of a superior genius, and therefore am I induced to make such a demand. If any one is able to cope with Abellino, thou art the man. I wait your answer."

Flodoardo paced the chamber in silence. Dreadful was the enterprise proposed: woe to him should Abellino discover his purpose! But Rosabella was the reward! He cast a look on the beloved one, and resolved to risk every thing.

He advanced towards the doge.

Andreas. "Now, then, Flodoardo, your resolution?"

Flodoardo. "Should I deliver Abellino into your power, do you solemnly swear that Rosabella shall be my bride?"

Andreas. "She shall; and *not till then.*"

Rosabella. "Ah, Flodoardo, I fear this undertaking will end fatally. Abellino is so crafty — so dreadful. Oh, look well to yourself, for should you meet with this detested monster, whose dagger ——"

Flodoardo (*interrupting her hastily*). "Oh, silence, Rosabella! at least allow me to hope! — Noble Andreas, give me your hand, and pledge your princely word, that Abellino once in your power, nothing shall prevent me from being Rosabella's husband."

Andreas. "I swear it; deliver into my power, either alive or dead, this most dangerous foe of Venice, and nothing shall prevent Rosabella from being your wife. In pledge of which I here give you my princely hand."

Flodoardo grasped the doge's hand in silence, and shook it thrice. He turned to Rosabella, and seemed on the point of addressing her, when he suddenly turned away, struck his forehead, and measured the apartment with disordered and unsteady steps. The clock in the tower of St. Mark's church struck *five.*

"Time flies!" cried Flodoardo; "no more delay then. In four-and-twenty hours will I produce in this very palace this dreaded bravo, Abellino."

Andreas shook his head. "Young man," said he, "be less confident in your promises; I shall have more faith in your performance."

Flodoardo (*serious and firm*). "Let things terminate as they may, either I will keep my word, or never again will cross the threshold of your palace. I have discovered some traces of the miscreant, and I trust that I shall amuse you to-morrow, at this time and in this place, with the representation of a comedy; but should it prove a tragedy instead, God's will be done."

Andreas. "Remember, that too much haste is dangerous: rashness will destroy even the frail hopes of success, which you may reasonably indulge at present."

Flodoardo. "Rashness, my lord? he who has lived as *I* have lived, and suffered what *I* have suffered, must have been long since cured of rashness."

Rosabella (*taking his hand*). "Yet be not too confident of your own strength, I beseech you! Dear Flodoardo, my uncle loves you, and his advice is wise! Beware of Abellino's dagger!"

Flodoardo. "The best way to escape his dagger is not to allow him time to use it: within four-and-twenty hours must the deed be done, or never. Now then, illustrious prince, I take my leave of you; to-morrow I doubt not to convince you that nothing is too much for love to venture."

Andreas. "Right; to *venture;* — but to *achieve?*"

Flodoardo. "Ah! that must depend ——" He paused suddenly; again his eyes were fastened eagerly on those of Rosabella; and it was evident that with every moment his uneasiness acquired fresh strength. He resumed his discourse to Andreas with a movement of impatience.

"Noble Andreas" said he, "do not make me dispirited; rather let me try whether I cannot inspire you with more confidence of my success. I must first request you to order a splendid entertainment to be prepared. At this hour in the afternoon of to-morrow let me find all the principal persons in Venice, both men and women, assembled in this

chamber; for, should my hopes be realised, I would willingly have spectators of my triumph. Particularly, let the venerable members of the College of Ten be invited, in order that they may at last be brought face to face with this terrible Abellino, against whom they have so long been engaged in fruitless warfare."

Andreas (*after eyeing him some time with a look of mingled surprise and uncertainty*). "They shall be present."

Flodoardo. "I understand, also, that since Conari's death you have been reconciled to the Cardinal Gonzaga; and that he has convinced you how unjust were the prejudices with which Conari had inspired you against the nobili Parozzi, Contarino, and the rest of that society. During my late excursions I have heard much in praise of these young men, which makes me wish to show myself to them in a favourable light. If you have no objection, let me beg you to invite them also."

Andreas. "You shall be gratified."

Flodoardo. "One thing more, which had nearly escaped my memory. Let no one know the motive of this entertainment, till the whole company is assembled. Then let guards be placed around the palace, and indeed it may be as well to place them even before the doors of this saloon; for in truth this Abellino is such a desperate villain, that too many precautions cannot be taken against him. The sentinels must have their pieces loaded; and, above all things, they must be strictly charged, on pain of death, to let every one *enter*, but no one *quit*, the chamber."

Andreas. "All this shall be done punctually."

Flodoardo. "I have nothing more to say. Noble Andreas, farewell. — Rosabella, to-morrow, when the clock strikes *five*, we shall meet again, or *never!*"

He said, and rushed out of the apartment. Andreas shook his head; while Rosabella sank upon her uncle's bosom, and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER III.

THE MIDNIGHT MEETING.

"VICTORY!" shouted Parozzi as he rushed into the Cardinal Gonzaga's chamber, where the chief conspirators were all assembled; "our work goes on bravely! Flodoardo returned this morning to Venice, and Abellino has already received the required sum."

Gonzaga. "Flodoardo does not want talents; I had rather he should live and join our party. He is seldom off his guard."

Parozzi. "Such vagabonds may well be cautious; *they* must not forget themselves who have so much to conceal from others."

Falieri. "Rosabella, as I understand, by no means sees this Florentine with unfavourable eyes."

Parozzi. "Oh, wait till to-morrow, and then he may make love to the devil and his grandmother, if he likes it. Abellino by that time will have wrung his neck round, I warrant you!"

Contarino. "It is strange that, in spite of all enquiries, I can learn but little at Florence respecting this Flodoardo. My letters inform me that some time ago there *did* exist a family of that name; but it has been long extinct, or if any of its descendants are still in being, at Florence their existence is quite a secret."

Gonzaga. "Are you *all* invited to the doge's to-morrow?"

Contarino. "All of us without exception."

Gonzaga. "That is well; it seems that my recommendations have obtained some weight with him, since his triumvirate has been removed. And in the evening a masked ball is to be given; did not the doge's chamberlain say so?"

Falieri. "He did."

Memmo. "I only hope there is no trick in all this.—If he should have been given a hint of our conspiracy! Mercy on us, my teeth chatter at the thought."

Gonzaga. "Absurd! By what means should our designs have been made known to him? The thing is impossible!"

Memmo. "Impossible? What! when there's scarce a cutpurse, housebreaker, or vagabond in Venice who has not been enlisted in our service, would it be so strange if the doge discovered a little of the business? A secret which is known to so many, how should it escape his penetration?"

Contarino. "Simpleton! the same thing happens to *him*, which happens to betrayed husbands: every one can see the horns except the man who carries them. And yet I confess it is full time that we should realise our projects, and prevent the possibility of our being betrayed."

Falieri. "You are right, friend; every thing is ready, and now the sooner that the blow is struck the better."

Parozzi. "Nay, the discontented populace, which at present sides with us, would be perfectly well pleased if the sport began this very night; delay the business longer, and their anger against Andreas will cool, and render them unfit for our purposes."

Contarino. "Then let us decide the game at once; be to-morrow the important day! Leave the doge to *my* disposal: I'll at least engage to bury my poniard in his heart, and then let the business end as it may, one of two things must happen; either we shall rescue ourselves from all trouble and vexation, by throwing every thing into uproar and confusion, or else we shall sail with a full wind from this cursed world to another."

Parozzi. "Mark me, friends; we must go armed to the doge's entertainment."

Gonzaga. "All the members of the College of Ten have been particularly invited."

Falieri. "Down with every man of them!"

Memmo. "Ay, ay! Fine talking! but suppose it should turn out to be 'down with *ourselves?*'"

Falieri. "Thou white-livered wretch! Stay at home, then, and take care of your worthless existence. But if our attempt succeeds, come not to us to re-imburse you for the sums which you have already advanced. Not a sequin shall be paid you back, depend on't!"

Memmo. "You wrong me, Falieri; if you wish to

prove my courage, draw your sword, and measure it against mine! I am as *brave* as yourself; but, thank Heaven, I am not quite so hot-headed."

Gonzaga. "Nay, even suppose that the event should not answer our expectations; Andreas, once dead, let the populace storm if it pleases: the protection of his holiness will sanction our proceedings."

Memmo. "The pope? May we count on his protection?"

Gonzaga (*throwing him a letter*). "Read there, unbeliever! The pope, I tell you, *must* protect us, since one of our objects is professed to be the assertion of the rights of St. Peter's chair in Venice. Prithee, Memmo, tease us no more with such doubts, but let Contarino's proposal be adopted at once. Our confederates must be summoned to Parozzi's palace with all diligence, and there furnished with such weapons as are necessary. Let the stroke of midnight be the signal for Contarino's quitting the ball-room, and hastening to seize the arsenal: Salviati, who commands there, is in our interests, and will throw open the gates at the first summons."

Falieri. "The Admiral Adorno, as soon as he hears the alarm-bell, will immediately lead his people to our assistance."

Parozzi. "Oh, our success is certain!"

Contarino. "Only let us take care to make the confusion as general as possible: our adversaries must be kept in the dark who are their friends and who their foes; and all but our own party must be left ignorant as to the authors, the origin, and the object of the uproar."

Parozzi. "By Heaven, I am delighted at finding the business at length so near the moment of execution!"

Falieri. "Parozzi, have you distributed the white ribands, by which we are to recognise our partisans?"

Parozzi. "That was done some days ago."

Contarino. "Then there is no more necessary to be said on the subject. Comrades, fill your goblets! We will not meet again together till our work has been completed."

Memmo. "And yet methinks it would not be unwise to consider the matter over again coolly."

Contarino. "Psha! consideration and prudence have

nothing to do with a rebellion: despair and rashness in this case are better counsellors. The work once begun, the constitution of Venice once boldly overturned, so that no one can tell who is master and who is subject, *then* consideration will be of service in instructing us how far it may be necessary for our interests to push the confusion. Come, friends! fill, fill, I say! I cannot help laughing when I reflect that, by giving this entertainment to-morrow, the doge himself kindly affords us an opportunity of executing our plans!"

Parozzi. "As to Flodoardo, I look upon him as already in his grave; yet before we go to-morrow to the doge's, it will be as well to have a conference with Abellino."

Contarino. "That care we will leave to you, Parozzi, and in the mean while here's the health of Abellino!

All. "Abellino!"

Gonzaga. "And success to our enterprise to-morrow."

Memmo. "I'll drink *that* toast with all my heart."

All. "Success to to-morrow's enterprise!"

Parozzi. "The wine tastes well, and every face looks gay. Pass eight-and-forty hours — and shall we look as gaily? We separate smiling; shall we smile when two nights hence we meet again? No matter."

CHAPTER IV.

THE DECISIVE DAY.

The next morning every thing in Venice seemed as tranquil as if nothing more than ordinary was on the point of taking place; and yet, since her first foundation, never had a more important day rose on the republic.

The inhabitants of the ducal palace were in motion early. The impatient Andreas forsook the couch on which he had past a sleepless and anxious night, as soon as the first sunbeams penetrated through the lattice of his chamber. Rosabella had employed the hours of rest in dreams of

Flodoardo, and she still seemed to be dreaming of him, even after sleep was fled. Camilla's love for her fair pupil had broken her repose; she loved Rosabella as had she been her daughter, and was aware that on this interesting day depended the lovesick girl's whole future happiness. For some time Rosabella was unusually gay; she sang to her harp the most lively airs, and jested with Camilla for looking so serious and so uneasy: but when mid-day approached her spirits began to forsake her. She quitted her instrument, and paced the chamber with unsteady steps. With every succeeding hour her heart palpitated with greater pain and violence, and she trembled in expectation of the scene which was soon to take place.

The most illustrious persons in Venice already filled her uncle's palace: the afternoon so much dreaded, and yet so much desired, was come; and the doge now desired Camilla to conduct his niece to the great saloon, where she was expected with impatience by all those who were of most consequence in the republic.

Rosabella sank on her knees before a statue of the Virgin. "Blessed lady!" she exclaimed with lifted hands, "have mercy on me! Let all to-day end well!"

Pale as death did she enter the chamber, in which, on the day before, she had acknowledged her love for Flodoardo, and Flodoardo had sworn to risk his life to obtain her. Flodoardo was not yet arrived.

The assembly was brilliant, the conversation was gay. They talked over the politics of the day, and discussed the various occurrences of Europe. The cardinal and Contarino were engaged in a conference with the doge, while Memmo, Parozzi, and Falieri stood silent together, and revolved the project, whose execution was to take place at midnight.

The weather was dark and tempestuous. The wind roared among the waters of the canal, and the vanes of the palace towers creaked shrilly and discordantly. One storm of rain followed hard upon another.

The clock struck four. The cheeks of Rosabella, if possible, became paler than before. Andreas whispered somewhat to his chamberlain. In a few minutes the tread of

armed men seemed approaching the doors of the saloon, and soon after the clattering of weapons was heard.

Instantly a sudden silence reigned through the whole assembly. The young courtiers broke off their love-speeches abruptly, and the ladies stopped in their criticisms upon the last new fashions. The statesmen dropped their political discussions, and gazed on each other in silence and anxiety.

The doge advanced slowly into the midst of the assembly. Every eye was fixed upon him. The hearts of the conspirators beat painfully.

"Be not surprised, my friends," said Andreas, "at these unusual precautions; they relate to nothing which need interfere with the pleasures of this society. You have all heard but too much of the bravo Abellino, the murderer of the procurator Conari, and of my faithful counsellors Manfrone and Lomellino, and to whose dagger my illustrious guest the Prince of Monaldeschi has but lately fallen a victim. This miscreant, the object of aversion to every honest man in Venice, to whom nothing is sacred or venerable, and who has hitherto set at defiance the whole vengeance of the republic, before another hour expires, perhaps this outcast of hell may stand before you in this very saloon."

All (*astonished*). "Abellino? What! the bravo Abellino?"

Gonzaga. "Of his own accord?"

Andreas. "No; not of his own accord, in truth: but Flodoardo of Florence has undertaken to render this important service to the republic, to seize Abellino cost what it may, and conduct him hither at the risk of his life."

A Senator. "The engagement will be difficult to fulfil! I doubt much Flodoardo's keeping his promise."

Another. "But if he *should* perform it, the obligation which Flodoardo will lay upon the republic will not be trifling."

A third. "Nay, we shall be all his debtors, nor do I know how we can reward Flodoardo for so important a service."

Andreas. "Be that my task. Flodoardo has demanded

my niece in marriage; if he performs his promise, Rosabella shall be his reward."

All gazed on each other in silence, some with looks expressing the most heartfelt satisfaction, and others with glances of envy and surprise.

Falieri (*in a low voice*). "Parozzi, how will this end?"

Memmo. "As I live, the very idea makes me shake as if I had a fever!"

Parozzi (*smiling contemptuously*). "It's very likely that Abellino should suffer himself to be caught!"

Contarino. "Pray inform me, signors, have any of you ever met this Abellino face to face?"

Several noblemen at once. "Not I! never!"

A Senator. "He is a kind of spectre, who only appears now and then, when he is least expected and desired."

Rosabella. "I saw him once! Never again shall I forget the monster!"

Andreas. "And my interview with him is too well known to make it needful for me to relate it."

Memmo. "I have heard a thousand stories about this miscreant, the one more wonderful than the other; and for my own part, I verily believe that he is Satan himself in a human form. I must say that I think it would be wiser not to let him be brought in among us, for he is capable of strangling us all as we stand here, one after another, without mercy!"

"Gracious Heaven!" screamed several of the ladies; "you don't say so? What! strangle us in this very chamber?"

Contarino. "The principal point is, whether Flodoardo will get the better of *him*, or *he* of Flodoardo: now I would lay a heavy wager, that the Florentine will return without having finished the business."

A Senator. "And *I* would engage, on the contrary, that there is but one man in Venice who is capable of seizing Abellino, and that *that* man is Flodoardo of Florence. The moment that I became acquainted with him, I prophesied that one day or other he would play a brilliant part in the annals of history."

Another Senator. "I think with you, signor; never was I so much struck with a man at first sight as I was with Flodoardo."

Contarino. "A thousand sequins on Abellino's not being taken—unless death should have taken him first."

The First Senator. "A thousand sequins on Flodoardo seizing him——"

Andreas. "And delivering him up to me, either alive or dead."

Contarino. "Illustrious signors, you are witnesses of the wager.—My Lord Vitalba, there is my hand on it—a thousand sequins!"

The Senator. "Done!"

Contarino (*smiling*). "Many thanks for your gold, signor: I look on it as already in my purse. Flodoardo is a clever gentleman, no doubt; yet I would advise him to take good care of himself, for he will find that Abellino knows a trick or two, or I am much mistaken."

Gonzaga. "May I request your highness to inform me whether Flodoardo is attended by the sbirri?"

Andreas. "No, he is alone; near four-and-twenty hours have elapsed since he set out in pursuit of the Bravo."

Gonzaga (*to Contarino, with a smile of triumph*). "I wish you joy of your thousand sequins, signor."

Contarino (*bowing respectfully*). "Since your excellency prophesies it, I can no longer doubt my success."

Memmo. "I begin to recover myself! Well, well! Let us see the end."

Three-and-twenty hours had elapsed since Flodoardo had entered into his rash engagement: the four-and-twentieth now hastened to its completion; and yet Flodoardo came not!

CHAPTER V.

THE CLOCK STRIKES "FIVE."

The doge became uneasy. The senator Vitalba began to tremble for his thousand sequins; and the conspirators could not restrain their spiteful laughter when Contarino gravely declared that he would gladly lose not *one* thousand sequins, but twenty, if the loss of his wager through Abellino's being captured might but secure the general safety of the republic.

"Hark!" cried Rosabella, "the clock strikes five."

All listened to the chimes in the tower of St. Mark's church, and trembled as they counted the strokes. Had not Camilla supported her, Rosabella would have sank upon the ground. The destined hour was past, and still Flodoardo came not!

The venerable Andreas felt a sincere affection for the Florentine: he shuddered as he dwelt upon the probability that Abellino's dagger had prevailed.

Rosabella advanced towards her uncle as would she have spoken to him; but anxiety fettered her tongue, and tears forced themselves into her eyes. She struggled for a while to conceal her emotions, but the effort was too much for her. She threw herself on a sofa, wrung her hands, and prayed to the God of mercy for help and comfort.

The rest of the company either formed groups of whisperers, or strolled up and down the apartment in evident uneasiness. They would willingly have appeared gay and unconcerned, but they found it impossible to assume even an affectation of gaiety. And thus elapsed another hour, and still Flodoardo came not.

At that moment the evening sun broke through the clouds, and a ray of its setting glory was thrown full upon the countenance of Rosabella. She started from the sofa, extended her arms towards the radiant orb, and exclaimed,

while a smile of hope played round her lips, "God is merciful! God will have mercy too on *me!*"

Contarino. "Was it at five o'clock that Flodoardo engaged to produce Abellino? It is now a full hour beyond his time."

The senator Vitalba. "Let him only produce him at last, and he may be a month beyond his time if he chooses."

Andreas. "Hark! No! Silence! silence! Surely I hear footsteps approaching the saloon."

The words were scarcely spoken when the folding doors were thrown open, and Flodoardo rushed into the room, enveloped in his mantle. His hair streamed on the air in wild disorder; a deep shade was thrown over his face by the drooping plumes of his *barrette,* from which the rain was flowing; extreme melancholy was impressed on all his features; and he threw gloomy looks around him, as he bowed his head in salutation of the assembly.

Every one crowded round him; every mouth was unclosed to question him; every eye was fixed on his face, as if eager to anticipate his answers.

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Memmo, "I am afraid that——"

"Be silent, signor!" interrupted Contarino sternly; "there is nothing to be afraid of."

"Illustrious Venetians!" it was thus that Flodoardo at length broke silence, and he spoke with the commanding tone of a hero; "I conclude that his highness has already made known to you the object of your being thus assembled. I come to put an end to your anxiety; but first, noble Andreas, I must once more receive the assurance that Rosabella of Corfu shall become my bride, provided I deliver into your power the bravo Abellino."

Andreas (*examining his countenance with extreme anxiety*). "Flodoardo, have you succeeded? Is Abellino your prisoner?"

Flodoardo. "If Abellino *is* my prisoner, shall Rosabella be my bride?"

Andreas. "Bring me Abellino, alive or dead, and she is yours. I swear it beyond the power of retracting, and swear also that her dowry shall be royal."

Flodoardo. "Illustrious Venetians, ye have heard the doge's oath."

All. "We are your witnesses."

Flodoardo (*advancing a few paces with a bold air, and speaking in a firm voice*). "Well, then, Abellino *is* in my power! — is in *yours!*"

All (*in confusion, and in a kind of uproar*). "In ours? Merciful heaven! Where is he? Abellino?"

Andreas. "Is he dead or living?"

Flodoardo. "He still lives."

Gonzaga (*hastily*). "He lives?"

Flodoardo (*bowing to the cardinal respectfully*). "He still lives, signor!"

Rosabella (*pressing Camilla to her bosom*). "Didst thou hear that, Camilla? Didst thou hear it? The villain still lives! Not one drop of blood has stained the innocent hand of Flodoardo."

The senator Vitalba. "Signor Contarino, I have won a thousand sequins of you."

Contarino. "So it should seem, signor."

Andreas. "My son, you have bound the republic to you for ever, and I rejoice that it is to Flodoardo that she is indebted for a service so essential."

Vitalba. "And permit me, noble Florentine, to thank you for this heroic act in the name of the senate of Venice. Our first care shall be to seek out a reward proportioned to your merits."

Flodoardo (*extending his arm towards Rosabella with a melancholy air*). "*There* stands the only reward for which I wish."

Andreas (*joyfully*). "And that reward is your own. But where have you left the blood-hound? Conduct him hither, my son, and let me look on him once more. When last I saw him, he had the insolence to tell me, 'Doge, I am your equal; this narrow chamber now holds the two greatest men in Venice.' Now then let me see how this other great man looks in captivity."

Two or three Senators. "Where is he? Bring him hither!"

Several of the ladies screamed at hearing this proposal.

"For heaven's sake!" cried they, "keep the monster away from us! I shall be frightened out of my senses if he comes here!"

"Noble ladies!" said Flodoardo with a smile expressing rather sorrow than joy, "you have nothing to apprehend. Abellino shall do you no harm; but he needs *must* come hither, to claim '*the Bravo's bride.*'" And he pointed to Rosabella.

"Oh, my best friend!" she answered, "how shall I express my thanks to you for having thus put an end to my terrors! I shall now tremble no more at hearing Abellino named; Rosabella shall now be called 'the Bravo's bride' no longer!"

Falieri. "Is Abellino already in this palace?"

Flodoardo. "He is."

Vitalba. "Then why do you not produce him? Why do you trifle so long with our impatience?"

Flodoardo. "Be patient! It's now time that the play should begin. Be seated, noble Andreas! Let all the rest arrange themselves behind the doge! — *Abellino's coming!*"

At that word both old and young, both male and female, with the rapidity of lightning flew to take shelter behind Andreas. Every heart beat anxiously; but as to the conspirators, while expecting Abellino's appearance, they suffered the torments of the damned.

Grave and tranquil sat the doge in his chair, like a judge appointed to pass sentence on this King of the Banditti. The spectators stood around in various groups, all hushed and solemn as were they waiting to receive their final judgment. The lovely Rosabella, with all the security of angels, whose innocence have nothing to fear, reclined her head on Camilla's shoulder, and gazed on her heroic lover with looks of adoration. The conspirators, with pallid cheeks and staring eyes, filled up the back-ground; and a dead and awful silence prevailed through the assembly, scarcely interrupted by a single breath!

"And now then," said Flodoardo, "prepare yourselves, for this terrible Abellino shall immediately appear before you! Do not tremble; he shall do no one harm."

With these words he turned away from the company,

and advanced towards the folding-doors: he paused for a few moments, and concealed his face in his cloak.

"Abellino!" cried he at length raising his head, and extending his arm towards the door. At that name all who heard it shuddered involuntarily, and Rosabella advanced unconsciously a few steps towards her lover. She trembled at the Bravo's approach, yet trembled more for Flodoardo than herself.

"Abellino!" the Florentine repeated in a loud and angry tone, threw from him his mantle and barrette, and had already laid his hand on the lock of the door to open it, when Rosabella uttered a cry of terror!

"Stay, Flodoardo!" she cried, rushing towards him, and — Ha! Flodoardo was gone, and there, in his place, stood Abellino, and shouted out, "Ho! ho!"

CHAPTER VI.

APPARITIONS.

Instantly a loud cry of terror resounded through the apartment. Rosabella sank fainting at the Bravo's feet; the conspirators were almost suffocated with rage, terror, and astonishment; the ladies made signs of the cross, and began in all haste to repeat their paternosters; the senators stood rooted to their places like so many statues, and the doge doubted the information of his ears and eyes.

Calm and terrible stood the Bravo before them, in all the pomp of his strange and awful ugliness; with his bravo's habit, his girdle filled with pistols and poniards, his distorted yellow countenance, his black and bushy eye-brows, his lips convulsed, his right eye covered by a large patch, and his left half buried among the wrinkles of flesh which swelled around it. He gazed round him for a few moments in silence, and then approached the stupified Andreas.

"Ho! ho!" he roared in a voice like thunder, "you

wished to see the Bravo Abellino? Doge of Venice, here he stands, and is come to claim his bride!"

Andreas gazed with looks of horror on this model for demons, and at length stammered out with difficulty, "It cannot be real! I must surely be the sport of some terrible dream!"

"Without there! Guards!" exclaimed the Cardinal Gonzaga, and would have hastened to the folding-doors; when Abellino put his back against them, snatched a pistol from his girdle, and pointed it at the cardinal's bosom.

"The first," cried he, "who calls for the guard, or advances one step from the place on which he stands, expires that moment. Fools! Do ye think I would have delivered myself up, and desire that guards might beset these doors, had I feared their swords, or intended to escape from your power? No! I am content to be your prisoner, but not through compulsion! I am content to be your prisoner, and it was with that intent that I came hither. No mortal should have the glory of seizing Abellino; if justice required him to be delivered up, it was necessary that he should be delivered up by *himself!* Or do ye take Abellino for an ordinary ruffian, who passes his time in skulking from the sbirri, and who murders for the sake of despicable plunder? No, by Heaven, no! Abellino was no such common villain! It's true I was a bravo; but the motives which induced me to become one were great and striking!"

Andreas (*clasping his hands together*). "Almighty God! can all this be possible?"

An awful silence again reigned through the saloon. All trembled while they listened to the voice of the terrible assassin, who strode through the chamber proud and majestic as the monarch of the infernal world.

Rosabella opened her eyes; their first look fell upon the Bravo.

"Oh, God of mercy!" she exclaimed, "he is still there! Methought, too, that Flodoardo—no, no, it could not be! I was deceived by witchcraft!"

Abellino advanced towards her, and attempted to raise her. She shrunk from his touch with horror.

"No, Rosabella," said the Bravo in an altered voice "what you saw was no illusion. Your favoured Flodoardo is no other than Abellino, the Bravo."

"It is false!" interrupted Rosabella, starting from the ground in despair, and throwing herself for refuge on Camilla's bosom. "Monster, thou canst not be Flodoardo! such a fiend can never have been such a seraph! Flodoardo's actions were good and glorious as a demi-god's! 't was of him that I learnt to love good and glorious actions, and 't was he who encouraged me to attempt them myself! His heart was pure from all mean passions, and capable of conceiving all great designs! Never did he scruple in the cause of virtue to endure fatigue and pain, and to dry up the tears of suffering innocence—that was Flodoardo's proudest triumph! Flodoardo and *thou!* Wretch, whom many a bleeding ghost has long since accused before the throne of Heaven, dare not thou to profane the name of Flodoardo."

Abellino (*proudly and earnestly*). "Rosabella, wilt thou forsake me? Wilt thou retract thy promise? Look, Rosabella, and be convinced: I, the Bravo, and thy Flodoardo, are the same!"

He said, removed the patch from his eye, and passed a handkerchief over his face once or twice; in an instant his complexion was altered, his bushy eyebrows and straight black hair disappeared, his features were replaced in their natural symmetry, and, lo! the handsome Florentine stood before the whole assembly, dressed in the habit of the Bravo Abellino.

Abellino. "Mark me, Rosabella! Seven times over, and seven times again, will I change my appearance, even before your eyes, and that so artfully, that study me as you will the transformation shall still deceive you. But change as I may, of one thing be assured; *I* am the man whom you loved as Flodoardo."

The doge gazed and listened without being able to recover from his confusion; but every now and then the words, "Dreadful! dreadful!" escaped from his lips, and he wrung his hands in agony. Abellino approached Rosabella, and said in the tone of supplication, "Rosa-

bella, wilt thou break thy promise? Am I no longer dear to thee?"

Rosabella was unable to answer; she stood like one changed to a statue, and fixed her motionless eyes on the Bravo.

Abellino took her cold hand, and pressed it to his lips.

"Rosabella," said he, "art thou still mine?"

Rosabella. "Flodoardo — oh, that I had never loved — had never seen thee!"

Abellino. "Rosabella, wilt thou still be the bride of Flodoardo? wilt thou be 'the Bravo's bride?'"

Love struggled with abhorrence in Rosabella's bosom, and painful was the contest.

Abellino. "Hear me, beloved one! It was for thee that I have discovered myself — that I have delivered myself into the hands of justice! For thee — oh, what would I not do for thee? Rosabella, I wait but to hear one syllable from your lips! speak but a decisive 'yes!' or 'no!' and all is ended! Rosabella, dost thou love me still?"

And still she answered not; but she threw upon him a look innocent and tender as ever beamed from the eye of an angel, and that look betrayed but too plainly that the miscreant was still master of her heart. She turned from him hastily, threw herself into Camilla's arms, and exclaimed, "God forgive you, man, for torturing me so cruelly!"

The doge had by this time recovered from his stupor: he started from his chair; threats flashed from his eyes, and his lip trembled with passion. He rushed towards Abellino; but the senators threw themselves in his passage, and held him back by force. In the mean while the Bravo advanced towards him with the most insolent composure, and requested him to calm his agitation.

"Doge of Venice," said he, "will you keep your promise? That you gave it to me, these noble lords and ladies can testify!"

Andreas. "Monster! miscreant! — oh, how artfully has this plan been laid to ensnare me! Tell me, Venetians; to *such* a creditor am I obliged to discharge my

fearful debt?—long has he been playing a deceitful, bloody part; the bravest of our citizens have fallen beneath his dagger, and it was the price of their blood which has enabled him to act the nobleman in Venice. Then comes he to me in the disguise of a man of honour, seduces the heart of my unfortunate Rosabella, obtains my promise by an artful trick, and now claims the maiden for his bride, in the hope that the husband of the doge's niece will easily obtain an absolution for his crimes. Tell me, Venetians, ought I to keep my word with this miscreant?"

All the Senators. "No, no, by no means!"

Abellino (*with solemnity*). "If you have once pledged your word, you ought to keep it, though given to the prince of darkness. Oh, fie, fie! Abellino, how shamefully hast thou been deceived in thy reckoning! I thought I had to do with men of honour! Oh, how grossly have I been mistaken.—(*In a terrible voice*) Once again, and for the last time, I ask you, Doge of Venice, wilt thou break thy princely word?"

Andreas (*in the tone of authority*). "Give up your arms."

Abellino. "And you will really withhold from me my just reward? Shall it be in vain that I delivered Abellino into your power?"

Andreas. "It was to the brave Flodoardo that I promised Rosabella; I never entered into an engagement with the murderer Abellino. Let Flodoardo claim my niece, and she is his; but Abellino can have no claim to her. Again I say, lay down your arms."

Abellino (*laughing wildly*). "The murderer Abellino, say you? Ho! ho! Be it your care to keep your own promises, and trouble not yourself about my murders: they are *my* affair, and I warrant I shall find a word or two to say in defence of them when the judgment-day arrives."

Gonzaga (*to the doge*). "What dreadful blasphemy!"

Abellino. "Oh, good lord cardinal, intercede in my behalf. You know me well; I have always acted by you like a man of honour, that at least you cannot deny. Say a word in my favour then, good lord cardinal."

Gonzaga (*angrily, and with imperious dignity*). "Address

not thyself to *me*, miscreant! What canst thou and I have to do together?—Venerable Andreas, delay no longer; let the guards be called in!"

Abellino. "What! Is there then no hope for me? Does no one feel compassion for the wretched Abellino? What! *no one!*—(*a pause*)—All are silent—*all!* 'T is enough! Then my fate is decided. Call in your guards!"

Rosabella (*with a scream of agony springing forward, and falling at the doge's feet*). "Mercy! mercy! Pardon him—pardon *Abellino!*"

Abellino (*in rapture*). "Say'st thou so? Ho! ho! then an angel prays for Abellino in his last moments!"

Rosabella (*clasping the doge's knees*). "Have mercy on him, my friend! my father! He is a sinner—but leave him to the justice of Heaven! He is a sinner—but oh, Rosabella loves him still."

Andreas (*pushing her away with indignation*). "Away, unworthy girl! you rave!"

Abellino folded his arms, gazed with eagerness on what was passing, and tears gushed into his brilliant eyes. Rosabella caught the doge's hand, as he turned to leave her, kissed it twice, and said, "If you have no mercy on *him*, then have none on *me!* The sentence which you pass on Abellino will be mine; 't is for my own life that I plead as well as Abellino's. Father! dear father! reject not my suit, but spare him!"

Andreas (*in an angry and decided tone*). "Abellino dies!"

Abellino. "And can you look on with dry eyes while that innocent dove bleeds at your feet? Go, barbarian! you never loved Rosabella as she deserved: now is she yours no longer! She is mine, she is Abellino's!"

He raised her from the ground, and pressed her pale lips against his own.

"Rosabella, thou art mine; death alone parts us! thou lov'st me as I *would* be loved; I am blest, whate'er may happen, and can now set fortune at defiance. To business, then!"

He replaced Rosabella, who was almost fainting, on the

bosom of Camilla, then advanced into the middle of the chamber, and addressed the assembly with an undaunted air: —

"Venetians, you are determined to deliver me up to the axe of justice! there is for me no hope of mercy! 'T is well! act as you please; but ere you sit in judgment over *me*, signors, I shall take the liberty of passing sentence upon some few of *you!* Now mark me! you see in me the murderer of Conari! the murderer of Paolo Manfrone! the murderer of Lomellino! I deny it not! But would you know the illustrious persons who paid me for the use of my dagger?"

With these words he put a whistle to his lips, sounded it, and instantly the doors flew open, the guards rushed in, and ere they had time to recollect themselves, the chief conspirators were in custody, and disarmed.

"Guard them well!" said Abellino in a terrible voice to the sentinels; "you have your orders!—Noble Venetians, look on these villains; it is to them that you are indebted for the loss of your three noblest citizens! I accuse of those murders, one, two, three, four, — and my good lord cardinal there has the honour to be the fifth."

Motionless and bewildered stood the accused; tale-telling confession spoke in every feature that the charge was true, and no one was bold enough to contradict Abellino.

"What can all this mean?" asked the senators of each other, in the utmost surprise and confusion.

"This is all a shameful artifice," the cardinal at length contrived to say: "the villain, perceiving that he has no chance of escaping punishment, is willing, out of mere resentment, to involve *us* in his destruction."

Contarino (*recovering himself*). "In the wickedness of his life he has surpassed all former miscreants, and now he is trying to surpass them in the wickedness of his death."

Abellino (*with majesty*). "Be silent! I know your whole plot, have seen your list of proscriptions, am well informed of your whole arrangement, and at the moment that I speak to you, the officers of justice are employed by

my orders in seizing the gentlemen with the white ribands round their arms, who this very night intended to overturn Venice. Be silent, for defence were vain."

Andreas (*in astonishment*). "Abellino, what is the meaning of all this?"

Abellino. "Neither more nor less than that Abellino has discovered and defeated a conspiracy against the constitution of Venice and the life of its doge! The Bravo, in return for your kind intention of sending him to destruction in a few hours, has preserved you from it."

Vitalba (*to the accused*). "Noble Venetians, you are silent under this heavy charge."

Abellino. "They are wise, for no defence could now avail them. Their troops are already disarmed, and lodged in separate dungeons of the state-prison: visit them there, and you will learn more. You now understand probably that I did not order the doors of this saloon to be guarded for the purpose of seizing the terrible Bravo Abellino, but of taking those heroes into secure custody.

"And now, Venetians, compare together *your* conduct and *mine!* At the hazard of my life have I preserved the state from ruin; disguised as a bravo, I dared to enter the assembly of those ruthless villains whose daggers laid Venice waste; I have endured for your sakes storm, and rain, and frost, and heat; I have watched for your safety while ye were sleeping; Venice owes to my care her constitution and your lives; and yet are my services deserving of no reward? All this have I done for Rosabella of Corfu, and yet will you withhold from me my promised bride? I have saved you from death, have saved the honour of your wives from the pollutor's kiss, and the throats of your innocent children from the knife of the assassin. Men! men! and yet will you send me to the scaffold?

"Look on this list! See how many among you would have bled this night, had it not been for Abellino, and see where the miscreants stand by whom you would have bled! Read you not in every feature, that they are already condemned by Heaven and their own conscience? Does a single mouth unclose itself in exculpation? Does a single

movement of the head give the lie to my charge? Yet the truth of what I have advanced shall be made still more evident."

He turned himself to the conspirators.

"Mark me!" said he, "the first among you who acknowledges the truth shall receive a free pardon. I swear it, *I*, the Bravo Abellino!"

The conspirators remained silent. Suddenly Memmo started forward, and threw himself trembling at the doge's feet.

"Venetians!" he exclaimed, "Abellino has told you true!"

"'T is false! 't is false!" exclaimed the accused all together.

"Silence!" cried Abellino in a voice of thunder, while the indignation which flamed in every feature struck terror into his hearers; "silence, I say, and hear me—or rather hear the ghosts of your victims!—Appear! appear!" cried this dreadful man in a tone still louder, "'t is time!"

Again he sounded his whistle; the folding-doors were thrown open, and there stood the doge's so much lamented friends Conari, Lomellino, and Manfrone!

"We are betrayed!" shouted Contarino, drew out a concealed dagger, and plunged it in his bosom up to the very hilt.

And now what a scene of rapture followed. Tears streamed down the silver beard of Andreas as he rushed into the arms of his long lost companions: tears bedewed the cheeks of the venerable triumvirate, as they once more clasped the knees of their prince, their friend, their brother! These excellent men, these heroes, never had Andreas hoped to meet them again till they should meet in heaven; and Andreas blessed Heaven for permitting him to meet them once more on earth. Those four men, who had valued each other in the first dawn of *youth*, who had fought by each other's sides in *manhood*, were now assembled in *age*, and valued each other more than ever! The spectators gazed with universal interest on the scene before them, and the good old senators mingled tears of

joy with those shed by the re-united companions. In the happy delirium of this moment nothing but Andreas and his friends was attended to: no one was aware that the conspirators and the self-murderer Contarino were removed by the guards from the saloon; no one but Camilla observed Rosabella, who threw herself sobbing on the bosom of the handsome Bravo, and repeated a thousand times, "Abellino then is not a murderer!"

At length they began to recollect themselves — they looked round them — and the first words which broke from every lip were, "Hail, saviour of Venice!" The roof rang with the name of Abellino, and unnumbered blessings accompanied the name.

That very Abellino, who not an hour before had been doomed to the scaffold by the whole assembly, now stood calm and dignified as a god before the adoring spectators; and now he viewed with complacency the men whose lives he had saved, and now his eye dwelt with rapture on the woman whose love was the reward of all his dangers.

"Abellino!" said Andreas, advancing to the Bravo, and extending his hand towards him.

"I am not Abellino," replied he smiling, while he pressed the doge's hand respectfully to his lips, "neither am I Flodoardo of Florence. I am by birth a Neapolitan, and by name Rosalvo: the death of my inveterate enemy the Prince of Monaldeschi makes it no longer necessary to conceal who I really am."

"Monaldeschi?" repeated Andreas with a look of anxiety.

"Fear not!" continued Rosalvo; "Monaldeschi, it's true, fell by my hand, but fell in honourable combat. The blood which stained his sword flowed from my veins, and in his last moments conscience asserted her empire in his bosom. He died not till he had written in his tablets the most positive declaration of my innocence as to the crimes with which his hatred had contrived to blacken me; and he also instructed me by what means I might obtain at Naples the restoration of my forfeited estates, and the re-establishment of my injured honour. Those means have been already efficacious, and all Naples is by this time

informed of the arts by which Monaldeschi procured my banishment, and of the many plots which he laid for my destruction; plots, which made it necessary for me to drop my own character, and never to appear but in disguise. After various wanderings, chance led me to Venice: my appearance was so much altered, that I dreaded not discovery, but I dreaded (and with reason) perishing in your streets with hunger. In this situation accident brought me acquainted with the banditti, by whom Venice was then infested; I willingly united myself to their society, partly with the view of purifying the republic from the presence of these wretches, and partly in the hope of discovering through them the more illustrious villains, by whom their daggers were employed. I was successful; I delivered the banditti up to justice, and stabbed their captain in Rosabella's sight. I was now the only bravo in Venice; every scoundrel was obliged to have recourse to me; I discovered the plans of the conspirators, and now *you* know them also. I found that the deaths of the doge's three friends had been determined on; and in order to obtain full confidence with the confederates, it was necessary to persuade them that these men had fallen beneath my dagger. No sooner had my plan been formed, than I imparted it to Lomellino; he, and he *only*, was my confidant in this business. He presented me to the doge as the son of a deceased friend; he assisted me with his advice; he furnished me with keys to those doors to the public gardens which none were permitted to pass through except Andreas and his particular friends, and which frequently enabled me to elude pursuit; he showed me several private passages in the palace, by which I could penetrate unobserved even into the doge's very bedchamber; when the time for his disappearance arrived, he not only readily consented to lie concealed in a retreat known only to ourselves, but was also the means of inducing Manfrone and Conari to join him in his retirement, till the fortunate issue of this day's adventure permitted me to set them once more at liberty. The banditti exist no longer; the conspirators are in chains; my plans are accomplished; and now, Venetians, if you still think him deserving of it, here

stands the Bravo Abellino, and you may lead him to the scaffold when you will!"

"To the scaffold?" exclaimed at once the doge, the senators, and the whole crowd of nobili; and every one burst into enthusiastic praises of the dauntless Neapolitan.

"Oh, Abellino," exclaimed Andreas while he wiped away a tear; "I would gladly give my ducal bonnet to be such a bravo as thou hast been! 'Doge,' didst thou once say to me, 'thou and I are the two greatest men in Venice;' but oh, how much greater is the Bravo than the Doge! Rosabella is that jewel, than which I have nothing in the world more precious; Rosabella is dearer to me than an emperor's crown; Rosabella is thine."

"Abellino!" said Rosabella, and extended her hand to the handsome Bravo.

"Triumph!" cried he; "Rosabella is the Bravo's bride!" and he clasped the blushing maid to his bosom.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

And now it would be not at all amiss to make Count Rosalvo sit down quietly between the good old doge and his lovely niece; and then cause him to relate the motive of Monaldeschi's hatred, in what manner he lost Valeria, what crimes were imputed to him, and how he escaped from the assassins sent in pursuit of him by his enemy; how he had long wandered from place to place, and how he had at length learnt (during his abode in Bohemia with a gang of gipsies) such means of disguising his features as enabled him to defy the keenest penetration to discover in the beggar Abellino the once admired Count Rosalvo; how in this disguise he had returned to Italy; and how Lomellino, having ascertained that he was universally believed at Naples to have long since perished by shipwreck (and therefore that neither the officers of the Inquisition nor the

assassins of his enemy were likely to trouble themselves any more about him), he had ventured to resume with some slight alterations his own appearance at Venice; how the arrival of Monaldeschi had obliged him to conceal himself, till an opportunity offered of presenting himself to the prince when unattended, and of demanding satisfaction for his injuries; how he had been himself wounded in several places by his antagonist, though the combat finally terminated in his favour; how he had resolved to make use of Monaldeschi's death to terrify Andreas still further, and of Parozzi's conspiracy to obtain Rosabella's hand of the doge; how he had trembled lest the heart of his mistress should have been only captivated by the romantic appearance of the adventurer Flodoardo, and have rejected him when known to be the Bravo Abellino; how he had resolved to make use of the terror inspired by the assassin to put her love to the severest trial; and how, had she failed in that trial, he had determined to renounce the inconstant maid for ever; with many other *hows*, *whys*, and *wherefores*, which not being explained will, I doubt, leave much of this tale still involved in mystery: but before I begin Rosalvo's history I must ask two questions.

First, Do my readers like the manner in which I relate adventures?

Secondly, If my readers *do* like my manner of relating adventures, can't I employ my time better than in relating them?

When these questions are answered, I may possibly resume my pen. In the mean while, gentlemen and ladies, good night, and pleasant dreams attend you!

THE END.

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